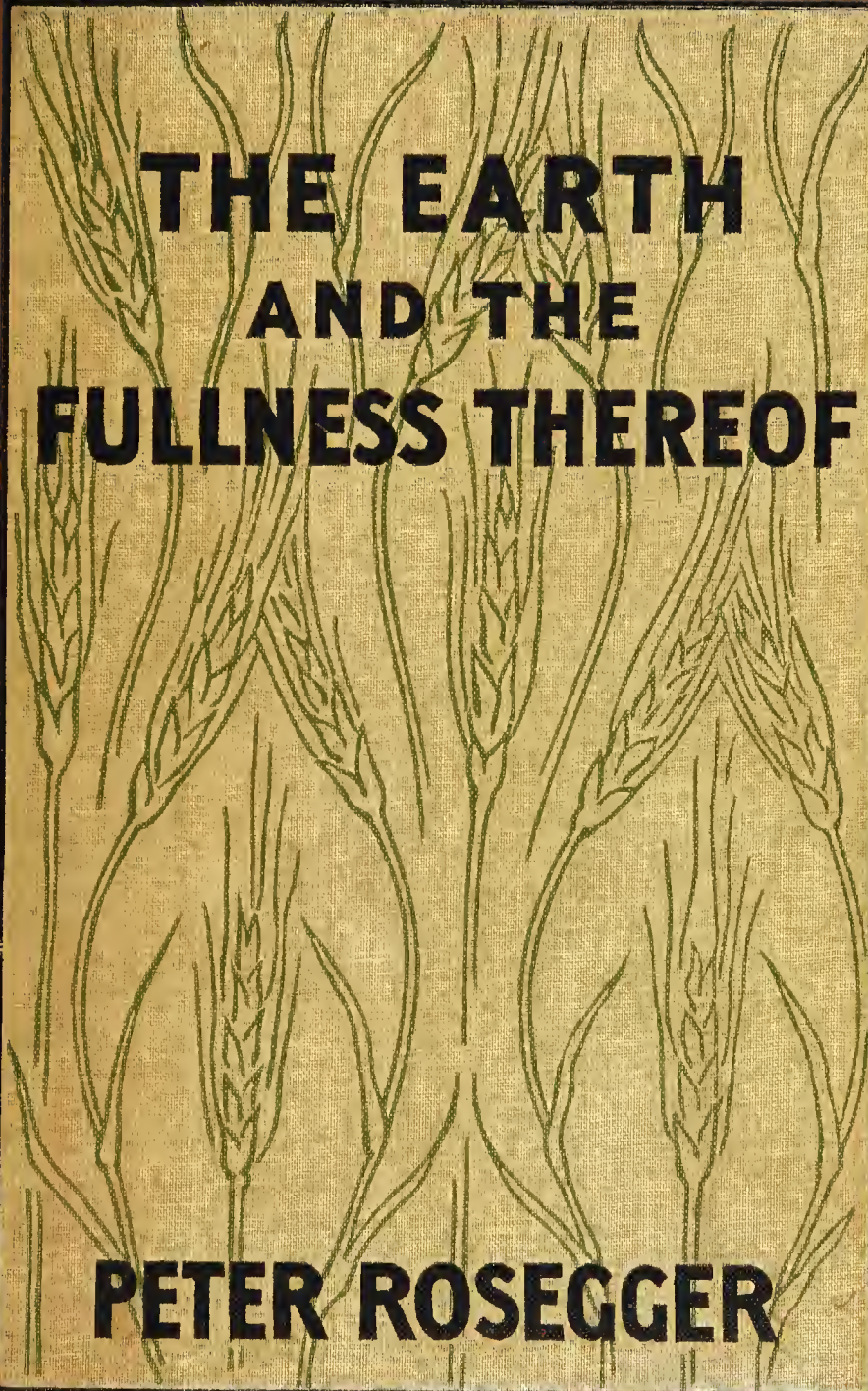
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The Earth and the Fullness Thereof

A Romance of Modern Styria

By Peter Rosegger

Authorized Translation
by
Frances E. Skinner

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1902

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The Earth and the Fullness Thereof

In der Zusen,
On the first Sunday of the year of grace, 1897.

THE deuce take you all! First this greeting, my dear friends, and now laugh, laugh, laugh!

"Long, long ago," the old street singer used to sing under our garden windows. I could not understand him then, but the first two days of this year have seemed like two eternities *en miniature*. The third day never ended at all. If this remarkable year, which has just begun, should ever draw to a close,—and according to human reckoning this is highly probable,—then, gentlemen, it will be my turn to laugh! And my laughter will sound in your ears like the last trump on the Day of Judgment, provided you have the slightest idea what I am trying to express by it.

In my present mood, however, I am not in the least inclined to laugh. For six long years, by working industriously with pen and scissors in your

company, I have been missing my true vocation. Now I am seeking it alone with the aid of the wanderer's staff, and I sincerely trust that my quest will not be in vain.

On next New Year's Eve I shall appear before you, in a night-cap and armed with a pitchfork. I shall not work one hour beyond my time, even should half of this January elapse before I find a situation. Try hard? Of course I shall. "In der Zusen" is the name of the little nest where, seated at the inn table, I am writing my first news to you, my mourning friends. Yesterday I was rejected at two farmhouses where I applied for work. To-day is a holiday. To my polite request at the first farm I received the reply: "Look here! In summer cherries grow and in winter vagabonds! Doubtless you gentlemen of the road would be glad to find a snug berth and a full dish at New Year's; but later, when the snow goes you 'll go too, and when the hard labour in the fields is most needed we should be left in the lurch. You 'd better join the Social Democrats! Perhaps you are one already!" And the door was slammed in my face.

It was a fine, large farm, situated on the high-road. It is a pity that they would not take me there. However, I secured material for a brilliant article on farming at no less than twenty *Kreuzer* a line. It will cost me as much as that.

At the second farm, as—politely doffing my hat—I asked if a farmhand were needed, the peasant, a small, stout, bold-faced fellow, fairly glared at me.

Then, with the utmost cheek, he seized my moustache, which was still respectably curled in an upward direction, and said: "What kind of a pitchfork have you got there? Is that a dung-fork?" My fists clenched involuntarily, but that failed to avenge my insulted pride; so, stretching out my hands with an imploring gesture, I asked him to give me a chance to try a real dung-fork. The peasant, however, was not a bad judge of a man's physique. Seizing my hand, which from all eternity was designed by the gods to use a pen, he said: "Are you trying to make game of me? No, I thank you, keep it for the spoon!"

"*Mein Gott!*" I exclaimed, and spreading out my ten fingers like the wings of an army I added, "It only needs a trial to show what else they are capable of!" And I placed myself threateningly in front of his portly body. He stepped back a little and, changing the conversation to a less dangerous topic, demanded my "Servants' Book."[1]

I then pulled my army certificate out of my pocket and said: "I have served His Majesty, the Emperor, three years. At present I am an officer in the reserve."

"And I needed a man for the oxen!" laughed the peasant, without showing the slightest respect for the officer in the reserve. These people are barbarians. However, I applied for the vacant place of

[1] In Germany, servants are required to show a book wherein are registered the different places where they have served, their characters, qualifications, etc.

honour, at which he asked me to have the goodness not to take him for a fool. And thus the conversation ended.

To-morrow I shall begin my search again. The village innkeeper, with whom I am staying to-day, needs a driver. Horses! That might be an appropriate calling for a cavalier, but I am not sure that you would let it pass for the wager, you scoundrels! I beg your pardon, I mean nothing disrespectful. I am only using the title which is most fitting for you! How glad I am, you pitiable slaves of the ink-pot, that one day I shall be able to show you the other side of this joke and to say to your faces: "A man's promise is a man's promise, even should it send him to work at a dunghill." And if your eyes water behind your spectacles, in your anguish of heart because of my misfortunes, then I will love you, you precious brags, all of you!

This village inn would be quite a comfortable place to stay in for a few days, if the host did not dispense his wines in such a natural state. From this sour, bitter stuff, at forty *Kreuzer* a litre, a better-educated restaurant-keeper would understand making two litres of fine dessert wine at one *Gulden* a bottle. The lack of our dear *Continental Post* in this hotel is a personal affront, and, to add insult to injury, I find in place of it the weekly edition of *The World's News*. Our firm should send our paper for one month, free, to the "Weissen Hirsch, In der Zusen." When they have once tried it they will never be without it.

At a neighbouring table sit three peasants wrangling for the past three hours over the sale of a calf. As a future comrade of theirs, I am, of course, much interested in it all, only I find that, to a certain extent, I lack the proper education. If the Englishman's assertion be true, that beefsteak increases man's intelligence, then these herdsmen must be the fathers of our intellectual culture, and I—as their prospective brother—its uncle.

Next week perhaps more from

HANS SPIRIDION TRAUTENDORFFER,
Editor of the Department of Political Economy
of *The Continental Post.*

My full name, which I herewith hand over to you, wrap in tissue paper and preserve carefully. A year from now, a year from now, when I return!

HOISENDORF, Second Sunday.

My most esteemed colleague, Herr Meyer:

Do not for an instant dream that I am sending you a *feuilleton* concerning life in the country. Not one line! And if you thought that by removing me from the flesh-pots of Egypt you were securing for yourself a "foreign correspondent," who from the homes of peasants would constantly supply *The Continental* with articles on farming, then you are doomed to disappointment. Besides, there would be no room for them, as all the extra space is required for "Court News."

To-day I have only the sorrowful report to send you of an adventurer in search of a situation, from which our chief—if I may be allowed to say it—will derive more pleasure for the present than the writer himself. *For the present!* Notice that I emphasise this.

On Monday and Tuesday, according to my diary, I applied at not fewer than thirteen farms. I thought the thirteenth would surely be unfortunate enough to accept me. But even that had its guardian angel. You see, my dear Meyer, how I am already familiarising myself with the people's way of thinking, but alas! it does not seem to help matters much. For the first farm I was too slender, for the second too "genteelly" dressed, although my travelling costume is already torn in one or two places. "A gentleman's clothes may be in tatters, the peasant's are darned," is one of their spiteful proverbs. The third farmer refused to take me because a man who carries all his possessions in a bundle is cut out for a vagabond. And the fourth said decisively that he had already had enough of a farmhand who went about wearing a white collar and putting on airs like a schoolmaster. I must affect the manners of Würzelsepp,[1] I said to myself. So on entering the next house, I lunged in, taking long strides, my knees and elbows bent, my hair rumpled, and my hands covered with pitch and dirt. As a worthy man I begged to be taken into service for one year.

[1] Würzelsepp, a character in Anzengruber's play, *Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld.*

The housefather asked with dignity: "Where do you come from?"

I replied: "From the barracks, with my discharge. Thank God, I am once more among peasants! Oh, these cities! This military service! One would not believe it until one had tried it! A man gets really ill if obliged to give up his accustomed manual labour. Work is the only good thing in the world!"

I thought I had managed very cleverly. But the peasant turned to an old woman standing behind him and said: "Do hear this chatter! He who knows anything about work tells a rather different tale."

"But thou wouldst not send him away at this late hour of night, wouldst thou?" said the old woman.

"He may stay over the holidays, then we 'll see about it."

Potztausend! Had I really secured a place?

As twilight came on I walked about the farm, examining the field of my future activities with the air of a connoisseur. And at that sacred hour, when you are sitting in groups of three or more in the *Roten Krug* before a glass of foaming beer, enjoying yourselves and making sarcastic remarks about this miserable world, I sat at the servants' table with the dirty menials, eating with a broad tin spoon from a common dish something which they called "sour pot-soup," and telling tales of my soldier-life. With inimitable modesty I told my comrades how I had stormed the capital city of Serajewo at the

Bosnian occupation; how I had taken that arch-fiend, Napoleon, prisoner; how at Königgrätz I had been shot in the breast by a bullet, which fortunately escaped through my back; how at the battle of Leipzig I had torn the flag from the hand of a Frenchman in red trousers, thus saving the victory to the Germans. Most esteemed colleague of the pen, you shall never be disgraced by me! These heroic deeds were not performed in vain. The housemother remarked that a man with such an historic past must not be allowed to sleep in the servants' bedroom on the heap of straw. She made up the best bed in the house for me, and as I sank into the rustling straw and drew the damp, cold, ragged coverlet over my head, I thought to myself: While thou art sleeping here, hero, the year will become shorter by one night —at about three *Kronen* an hour. You see, I remain political economist to the last.

The next day was the Feast of the Epiphany. In the bright morning hours, three youths from the orphanage, representing the Three Wise Men from the East, came chanting their hymns to the Christ-child. And these Oriental Majesties were treated to fried dumplings and honey. After breakfast, and when the King of Ethiopia had honoured me with a speech, begging for money, the high dignitaries, with all the elasticity of youth, set out again on their journey around the world.

At midday came a great feast, which I cannot describe; I only know there was much of it. In some of the dishes grease was clinging to the edges, and

flies were swooning in the fat of the dumplings. For the heat of the stove keeps these dear little creatures alive in the peasant's house, even in winter, and the window-panes are richly decorated with their marks. My appetite was soon satisfied, and in the afternoon, together with the other labourers, I rested from the toil—of to-morrow.

The next day was rainy. The housefather—as the peasant farmer is called by the people working for him—ordered me to stay in the house and "*Span machen.*" *Span machen?* How I missed my dictionary! I wandered through the barns and stables, trying to find some friendly soul who would explain to me what *Span machen* meant. The old herdswoman looked at me in amazement, but at last it dawned upon her that *Span machen* was not a necessary accomplishment for a soldier. She gave me the following instructions: First I must collect chips from the wood-pile, carry them into the house, wash and dry them before the fire, then with a sharp knife shave off the thin splinters, and dry these on top of the stove, to serve afterwards as tapers with which to light the room at night. So, gentlemen of *The Continental Post*, who are daily providing information for the people by the bucketful, now you, too, know how tapers are made to light the peasant's house. But to know is one thing, to be able to do it another! It was the old, old story. I followed the instructions to the letter, but the first chip burned up in the fire, the second split in twain, and at the third the housefather took the knife from me,

telling me that I did not know how to do anything, and he added that it was a pity to waste the pine-wood, especially when fir-trees were so scarce in the forest. Why he should have jumped from the wood-pile to pine-wood and thence to fir-trees, the *Pinus silvestris*, I cannot imagine. What do you think about it, Meyer?

I did not know how to do anything! My first impulse after this humiliation was: A duel with pistols! But as the man quietly and with the greatest cleverness shaved the broad, thin tapers from the dry chips, I perceived that he was my superior. I left the house, and that I might make myself useful in some other way, I took a shovel from the tool-room and scraped away the remaining crusts of snow from the eaves.

One of the old farmhands appeared: "What art thou about there, man? That bit of snow disturbs nobody and will go away of itself when it rains. If thou hast nothing else to do, then go and sift chaff!"

Sift chaff! Now I saw that my diplomacy had failed and that it was time for me to give up my portfolio. On the same evening the housefather came up to me and, laying his coarse hand on my shoulder, said: "The most sensible thing thou canst do is to take a good long rest to-night and then to-morrow go on to the next house. Thou art willing enough, but thou hast no head for it."

When I was a boy the blacksmith used to say it was a pity to waste my clever head on such work,

and so I was sent to the city. This same Hans Trautendorffer is supposed to be descended from an old race of knights, and it is quite possible that my great-great-great-grandfather was a swine thief in the time of Charles the Great. To make a long story short, my uncle, the baker, tried very hard to see if such a fallen nobleman as himself could not re-attain the heights from which he had descended. Not every baker has such a superhuman intellect as that. In those days, however, I preferred fresh-baked loaves to stale charters of nobility, and in the gymnasium I always managed to keep free from the odium of the tuft-hunter. And when I took up my knapsack to enter the military service, I was already prepared for the university. Then, according to a very common custom, instead of entering the university I entered journalism, and later, surrounded by your brilliant intellects, I earned the reputation of being a dreamer, yet was still clever enough to support the position with dignity and to excuse as childish weakness the pencil drawings of my chief on my manuscripts. As political economist, I hold the purse-strings—eh, Meyer, you know that. And now am I to be declared as lacking in brains?

At any rate, my past is of great use to me now. The blacksmith developed my physical powers, the journalist my brain. From tanned leather at least peasants' boots can be made!

The next day I continued my wanderings. I entered a beautiful mountain region. At Kailing I followed the river up to the Rechthal and towards the

Almgai. The narrow road, paved with a pudding of mud and fresh snow, the people about here boastingly call a high-road. Instead of being overcome by bandits, beaten to death, and buried under a covering of moss, or left lying in a half-starved condition, I proceeded on my way. Very much alive, I knocked at the door of a lonely farmhouse. I had been told that the widow living there needed a farmhand.

The widow, a fresh, dapper little woman, was not to be joked with, and asked how old I was.

"Twenty! Not including the fifteen school years, for they were lost time."

She laughed, but pitilessly pursued her examination. What was I good for?

"Madam, there is no work too menial for me and none too good."

What wages did I require?

"I would be satisfied with anything." I shall receive my pay, Meyer, you know, from another quarter.

But my reply seemed to arouse suspicion in the good lady. To be satisfied with anything! Perhaps she had had the experience with her farmhands: dissatisfied with everything. But I endeavoured to show myself to the best advantage. My arms and legs were no longer bent; I stood erect with head thrown back, a spark of joy in my eyes ready to burst into a flame, should she say, "You please me!" But, alas! She had not fallen in love with me; instead, she remarked indifferently over one shoulder: "Oh,

to be sure. Everyone knows best himself what he is worth. I don't need anybody just now."

Dost thou see? If I had demanded eighty *Gulden* a year wages, an entire outfit of clothes with calf-skin boots, meat five times a week, then she might have bought me, but as a present she would n't have me. A crafty wood-cutter, whom I met soon afterwards, put the idea into my head.

This region is dark and dismal. The mountains on both sides are precipitous, and black as gigantic coal-buckets turned upside down; the gorges so narrow that a hay-waggon and a fool could not pass each other. I don't know why, but two or three years ago, when we were touring among the mountains, everything seemed so much more beautiful. I was told that on the summit, where stood but few scattered huts, there was a lack of farmhands, as no one would stay up there who was not rooted to the ground like the cembra-pine. And even the pines wait longingly for avalanches to carry them to the valleys below, where clever cabinet-makers will transform and elevate them to the rank of finely polished tables, bureaus, and writing-desks. Incomprehensible way of the world: in order to rise one must first fall! In my case, however, it seems to be exactly the opposite. But wait, wait!

Last evening I reached a wintry valley high up among the mountains. For a long time I had noticed a perpendicular wall of rock rising before me, and as I walked through the wooded ravine I discovered a village at the foot of the precipice. A few

scattered houses of rough masonry, a small number of large farms, and farther on, where the gorges lead out to the mountains, wood-cutters' huts and charcoal-pits. A little at one side, upon a slope behind the precipice, stands the church with its pointed spire; beside it is the parsonage, and below, by the brook, is the schoolhouse. There are, of course, two inns, with thick walls and innumerable small windows—but I see I am indulging in my old weakness of word-painting. What nonsense! Nowadays people try to paint pictures with words and to express thoughts with colours. In one of these inns you may buy tobacco, take a ticket for the lottery, and hire a lodging, and of this last privilege I availed myself. The place is called Hoisendorf, and far and wide it represents the centre of the universe. This was the subject of the conversation in the inn, when a tattered old forester entered and seated himself on the bench by the stove. He poured a glass of schnapps down his throat, then gurgled in his deep guttural voice that he had been where royalty dwelt, and that Vienna was at least ten times as large as Hoisendorf, at which the hostess called him a brag.

A pile of newspapers lay on the shelf, and to while away the time, I took up the latest number. And do you know in what year the good Hoisendorfers are now living? At the time of the murder of President Carnot, June 25, 1894. The world's history is well seasoned by the time it reaches the calendars and weekly papers of these backwoods. On the other hand, it will no longer be contradicted.

The courier is just about leaving. He is an old pedler with three feet, one of which is of wood and the other two gouty. He is the mail-carrier to Kailing, and attends to the transportation of goods at the same time. There is something truly majestic about these people—they are never in haste. They know how to wait, they stand on solid ground. The three-legged man will take with him this epistle from

Your still wandering

FARMHAND.

ADAMSHAUS, Third Sunday.

Herr Doctor Stein von Stein,

Editor-in-Chief of *The Continental Post:*

I now make the crushing announcement to Your Imperial Highness that I have become a farmhand! My residence is Adamshaus, near Hoisendorf, Almgai, to which place kindly send *The Continental.* Many thanks for the notice about me in the last number. Before the year is over you will have had enough of this joke. I am not in the mood for writing more.

H. T.

ADAMSHAUS IN ALMGAI, January 17, 1897.

Herr Professor A. Simrock, Ph.D. in M.

My dear old Friend:

Thy New Year's greeting was intended for the journalist, but the letter has wandered about the country for two weeks, and where dost thou suppose it finds thy Hans? Pray do not think me insane or

anything approaching it. There is so much wisdom in the world nowadays that is far nearer to insanity than that which is called the genuine article. After having journeyed to various places, thy letter arrived one day at a half-snowed-in farmhouse in the Gai Mountains, an hour or more distant from the nearest hamlet. In this wilderness lives thy correspondent, and, what is more, he has turned farmhand, engaged for the entire year. It is no carnival jest, it is dead earnest. I beg thee to be patient and allow me to pour out my heart to thee.

Never until now, in my indescribable loneliness here, have I fully appreciated or thanked thee, Alfred, for preserving our schoolday friendship. During the week I shall have my work as a sturdy comrade; but I dread the Sundays, when my foolish heart will long for a congenial soul with which to commune and sympathise, and there will be no one far or near but a poor, simple household, who have all they can do to exist; and there is naught else to console me but the cold winter and the frozen mountains. In such hours, let me flee to thee, thou dear fellow, with thy heart of gold, that—on paper at least—I may gossip, curse, laugh, and perhaps also—no, I will not weep; I am determined on that point. What I shall write about every Sunday I do not know now, but whatever it may be, I will speak the truth. It may cost me an effort to tell thee the whole story; there are such unheard-of things, so much nonsense mixed up with it all, and perhaps, at the end thou wilt discover a little cour-

age too. If so, tell me frankly. Were there not someone to say to me every week: "Thou hast done right! Thou art good! Thou art brave! Persevere!" then, indeed, I do not know how this would all end.

Dost thou notice nothing peculiar? As if perhaps the writer of these lines had frost-bitten fingers? As if the perfume of the letter-paper were somewhat unusual? Now, then, I will tell thee my story. When thou art once acquainted with the premise, the rest follows as a matter of course. Because the first thing happened, the second was bound to happen also.

It began in the restaurant *Zum roten Krug*, where at thy visit last autumn we drank that heavenly Rüdesheimer, and where, as thou knowest, the staff of *The Continental Post* has its headquarters. These gentlemen are all extremely generous—with their wine! On the occasion of which I write—it happened to be the anniversary of St. Leopold [1]— after I had disposed of my third or fourth glass of new wine, my tongue began to run away with me, and as editor of the department of political economy, I expressed myself rather freely concerning certain measures of which I had learned a few days earlier.

"The devil take it!" said I. "It does not suffice for us to adopt such a financial policy entirely against our own convictions, but we must also suck the very blood of the honest farmer to fatten other

[1] St. Leopold, the patron saint of Southern Austria.

classes of society, that they may bring forth a lot of manikins!" The new wine spoke in me, nevertheless I was held responsible for the sacrilegious words. And then I boiled over more than ever. "Yes, manikins!" and I pounded the table with my fist. "He who would see real men must go to the peasants, to the shepherds!"

"Salomon Gessner!"[1] cried one.

"I will beg you to keep away from me with your Jew!" I answered hotly. I felt insulted at the outbreak of laughter at my expense. Would it have occurred to thee that they meant the old Swiss artist, when there are so many Salomons in our own generation? To make a long story short, the discussion continued and all at once the following remark escaped me:

"The peasant, in spite of all, is a more genuine man than a banker, whose calling consists in handling paper-money, which is far more soiled than the peasant's frock. And the peasant is also a man of cleaner morals than, for example, a newspaper-maker, who is always temporising and recanting."

Again it was the cursed new wine that was speaking. Upon the face of the editor of *The Continental Post*, our Herr Doctor Stein von Stein, appeared a sardonic smile, with which we are acquainted whenever he reduces our salaries, and he remarked blandly:

"Nothing will prevent Herr Trautendorffer's ex-

[1] Swiss painter, poet, and prose writer of pastoral idylls of the eighteenth century.

changing his occupation of making corrupt newspapers for the more moral life of the peasant."

I started up with the words: "Why not then? If the gentlemen think that my words are stronger than my arm—good!"

A bottle of Rüdesheimer was ordered at once, for the inspiration of such an affair as this required something stronger than domestic wine. A few of the gentlemen, fearing an unpleasant outcome, endeavoured to change the discussion to a more friendly character. But I felt insulted and would not be quieted. Then a wager was proposed: "Trautendorffer shall get the best of his adversary and go into service as a peasant farmhand for one week."

And I replied: "For one week! For a year!"

Here Doctor Stein von Stein drummed with his seal ring on the table and said in a solemn tone: "If our Herr Hans Trautendorffer will spend the coming year 1897, from beginning to end, out in the country with those ideal people, as a common peasant farmhand, I will pledge myself to pay him on the 1st of January, 1898, the sum of twenty thousand *Kronen* in cash. If our Herr Hans Trautendorffer should give up this rôle of 'moral character' one day before the year is at an end, then shall he be obliged to 'recant and temporise' for *The Continental Post* two entire years without salary!"

"Signed and sealed!" I cried in assent.

"Then it only remains for us to make our declaration before a notary."

"Quite unnecessary," I replied. "There are three witnesses present. I give you my word of honour!"

Art thou horrified? I was, myself, the next morning; and my colleague, Doctor Wegmacher, was of the opinion that wagers made under the influence of wine were not binding.

"What are you thinking of?" I cried, in a towering passion. "I do not allow my word of honour to be trifled with!"

I believe there are a few drops of peasant blood in my veins, having arrived there by a circuitous route, on the maternal side, three generations back —my uncle must have known about it. So now we are going to try the *renaissance*. I have already had many an experience on this round earth. The blacksmith fortunately put a little iron into my blood; the soldier's life taught me courage and obedience; journalism, the necessary indifference— all characteristics in harmony with the peasant's yodel. Perhaps I may succeed in giving my already somewhat worn-out soul a good ventilating; besides, the reward is not a bad one, and then I can enjoy myself for several years.

So it is all in solemn earnest, and I left home at the beginning of the year. I was really magnificent as I started in my tourist clothes, with my small bundle of earthly possessions, which I tied to my stick and carried over my shoulder. My colleagues all sought to treat this change in my fortunes as a great joke, but I turned my back upon them and departed.

The devil had his fun with me at first, as I wandered, half-starved, about the country. If that had lasted much longer it would have ended in my begging or stealing. I then resolved to tie a knot in my pocket-handkerchief to remind myself hereafter not to be in such haste to abuse every poor tramp who appears before the police in handcuffs.

Overtaken by stormy weather, I stopped a few days in a mountain hamlet, Hoisendorf in Almgai, and here thine odd friend seems to stick fast. Over in the tavern I played cards with a young man, who looked to me like a pock-marked forester's assistant. Pock-marked faces have always pleased me; they show signs of a victorious fight with death. But I did not fancy the watery blue eyes of the young forester; they were too citified with their spectacles. Yet they were the most agreeable feature about this robust youth, whose language was even more awkward than his card-playing, and who was constantly hitting something with his long arms and legs. Whenever he won, he comforted me with the assurance that I would be all the more fortunate in my love affairs! Good heavens, what age are we living in! He would not take the money he won, saying that he had only played to keep from being bored, and to lose money was worse than being bored. As I explained to him the sacredness of gambling debts, which even a rascal will insist on paying, although obliged to cheat honourable people to do it, he took the sinful money, but in return he invited me to his house for a cup of coffee. Why am I drawing

such a detailed picture of this young forester? Because, after all, he was not a forester, but the schoolteacher. And why should I describe the schoolteacher of Hoisendorf? Because it was he who pointed out the way to my place of destination.

He is unmarried. I joked him about this, telling him that a genuine village schoolmaster ought to have a nice little wife and a half-dozen boys. While the coffee was boiling, he told me why schoolmasters had only sons. He said it was on account of the diet. He had read it in Hyrtle's *Anatomy*. Economy produces boys, luxury girls. What has not been taught in the university of Hoisendorf is not worth mentioning!

"My family!" With these words he introduced me to his books. They were well arranged in a bookcase with glass doors. A worthy collection of writers of every trend of thought: Walter Scott, Lessing, Zola, Keller, Spielhagen, Baumbach, Bierbaum.

"How could a man owning such treasures descend to card-playing?" I asked.

"Oh, because he was sorry for me, was his reply. Books were no entertainment for a snowed-in traveller."

"But I am no traveller. You must count me among the peasants."

"Indeed! Then surely cards are more suitable than books."

"Are you the only one who reads the books?"

"Yes—that is to say, there are a few people here who like to read a book now and then. . . ." Here he stopped abruptly.

When after coffee I handed him a cigar — *Mein Himmel!* He lighted it at the wrong end and struggled industriously with it, until at last I took it away from him.

"If the vicious habit gives you no pleasure, then leave it alone," I said.

And he gave the striking answer: "If the pleasure which is sometimes connected with vice could only excuse it!"

"If it only could!" I replied.

The young man was strangely embarrassed and accidentally upset the coffee-pot, sending a brown stream over the table.

"Now, you see, the housekeeper is needed!" I said teasingly, "then this would be treated as the poorest kind of a joke; it would arouse the most charming indignation, and in the evening, of course, would follow the sweetest reconciliation."

"There would be no indignation with us on account of these few drops."

"What! Then you have one after all?"

The schoolmaster's face grew scarlet.

And now, my friend, I will say "Continued in our next," for the tallow-candle in my stable lantern is burned out, and I have written until I am quite warm and in good spirits.

More next Sunday.

Thy HANS in the clouds.

ADAMSHAUS, the fourth of the Sundays, which I count with fear and trembling and await with unspeakable longing.

Now, my friend and Professor, I will complete the historic document of last week, that thou mayest finally discover where thy foolish chum really is and how he got here.

Instead of probing farther into the secrets of the schoolteacher of Hoisendorf, I bravely asked him if he thought a farmhand might be needed on one of the neighbouring mountain farms.

"Needed!" he cried. "If one would only come! Everyone who can work goes away, perhaps is obliged to go, or there is some other reason. There is no one here willing to work for low wages. And the many requirements of the labourers in these days cannot be met by our poor mountain peasants. It is a hard cross to bear."

"I know of a cheap labourer."

"Cheap! Then probably he is not worth much."

"He is at least willing, I will answer for that. And he is healthy and strong also, although he might require a little leniency at first."

"Then I can tell you of a place at once," said the schoolmaster. "But it is far up on the mountain, in one of the very remotest houses, the one called Adamshaus. There is much land, but there are no hands to work it. The peasant is sickly and the oldest son is in the army. The second son has been crippled by a shot from a hunter. The youngest of all is still in school, and"— he cleared away the

coffee things with a great clatter—"there is also a daughter. They are nice people, but now they are having a hard time."

The next morning, in spite of the snow-storm, a number of children arrived at the school. They were all bundled in thick mufflers, only the tips of the little red noses and the bright eyes being visible. One slender lad of about thirteen threw off his superfluous wrappings as soon as he had entered the schoolhouse, causing the snow to fly in all directions. Then he handed the teacher a few books. His round face glowed and he was full of life.

"Franzel, come here!" called the schoolmaster, and, turning to me, he said: "Here is one of the Adamshaus family. Tell him, my boy, if the road up to thy house is passable."

"I slid down on my sled," was the short reply.

"When thou goest home, I will go with thee," said thy Hans to the lad.

The teacher looked at me inquiringly; so I was obliged to make the confession that I was the man seeking a situation as farmhand. Then I noticed how confused he became, and, with a note of warning in his voice, he said that he had supposed of course it was for someone else. If I were really in earnest, the place at Adamshaus would not be in the least suitable for a man like myself. Poverty and sadness indescribable would I find there, nothing but misery. It needed quite a different sort of man to endure the raw winds, the insufficient nourishment,

the poor accommodations, and the hard work. Why, it was ridiculous; but then, I probably meant it only for a joke. And besides, the boy was not going home at all to-day, for in such weather he always remained over night in Hoisendorf, and I must hasten if I wished to return to the valley before the paths were blocked.

However, I was not in the least disconcerted by his remarks. I tied up my bundle, paid my bill at the tavern,—one *Gulden* and forty *Kreuzer* for two nights' lodging and board, the host adding that for natives it was cheaper yet,—and started, not descending the valley, as my fickle guide had advised me, but ascending it as he had at first recommended, following the brook, murmuring under its covering of snow. The flakes fell so thickly that neither house, mountain, nor path was visible—I was surrounded by a white night; when the sharp wind was not cutting me through and through, the flakes stung my hot cheeks. The innkeeper had told me to follow the stream until I reached a mill, then on to a second, and at the third to turn to the left up the mountain.

The mills were all there, as he had said, but by the third was no mountain which one could ascend. I chose the path, already trodden, and walked on to the edge of the precipice, then diagonally up the slope between underbrush and swaying trees with snow-laden branches, which from time to time shook off their burden upon the wanderer below.

And as I struggled up through this silent, snowy

mist, the thought occurred to me: "How lonely! How lonely some people must be in this world!"

All at once through the blinding storm I perceived a human form, sitting on the snow under a larch-tree. It was the bent figure of a man, with a large bundle thrown across his shoulder, a huge meal-sack, which appeared to be much heavier than my own little pack. The man puffed and snorted and wiped the sweat from his brow. He was no longer young.

I stepped up to him and asked: "What would the father say to our exchanging bundles?"

He drew a deep breath. "May I not help you carry it?" I said.

"God bless you! If a man has anything, he—he should carry it himself."

"But, father, you can scarcely breathe."

"True, true. It is my asthma."

Then I took the meal-sack from him and the little man, supported by his stick, and with tottering, uncertain footsteps, climbed up ahead of me through the cloud of snow. He was frequently obliged to stop and catch his breath—and to this day, Alfred, it makes my own breath catch to think of it.

As the poor, miserable man was thus climbing ahead of me, relieved of his load, while I had become the beast of burden, it suddenly came to me: "Now thou art on the right path! Everything which thou hast heretofore experienced and accomplished, Hans, is nothing. Thou art late in discovering it, but thou hast begun at last. What thou art

now doing is the first real day's work of thy life!" And I felt such a glow of warmth under my poorly filled money-belt, and my mind was suddenly illuminated, as if a festal fire had been kindled in my brain, and at the same time in all the four chambers of my heart as well. "Hans!" I heard a voice crying, like that of my dear departed mother, when she used to read to us children from the book of family sermons: "Hans! Help the poor and needy bear their burdens!"

Oh, my friend! I cannot tell thee how in this moment everything trivial assumed its just proportions. Our Dr. Stein von Stein recently valued *The Continental Post* at half a million *Gulden*, without even referring to its "inestimable moral worth." But I tell thee, there are moments in life when a beast of burden . . . But one should not be proud of one's burdens too soon.

I cannot tell my story as I ought, giving the incidents in their proper order, I still feel such a storm raging within me. I cannot yet realise how it is possible that I am sitting here on a three-legged stool, in a little room warmed only by the adjoining ox-stalls, writing upon a worm-eaten chest to my friend in the distant city, which is like a dream to me now. But a few weeks ago, with this same pen, I was gossiping with thee in a jesting vein about political economy. Is it not so? Thou canst not think, Alfred, how stupid the city-bred man is when he tries to talk about the conditions in the farming districts. I can only say to thee that they make

one's heart bleed. It is genuine misery. I now see with what frivolous ideas I have entered a class where every frivolous word freezes on one's lips at sight of the magnitude of care and suffering. I should be unable to-day to find the right tone in which to write to the gentlemen of *The Continental.* Since I crossed the threshold of this old patriarch's house, a barrier has fallen between me and those gay birds. I do not know whether I am ill or whether I have recovered my health. They would mockingly say: "He has found his heart." I do not know what it is, whether only a passing sentiment or a restoration of manhood. Alfred, I hope thou wilt stand by me, helping me through the year by letting me tell thee all my experiences and all that I feel. It will be an adventurous, dark year. Thou must watch and see that I do not lose hold on the line which leads me and which shall at last guide me out by the right door.

If thou couldst see my hands now, thou wouldst not find them callous, but on the inside are places where the skin is broken and which are still painful, while my hips and shoulders are covered with black-and-blue spots. And they tell me that what I have been doing during these last few days is not work at all!

My resolution to persevere is unbroken—that is to say, at most times. But last night, as I lay in the wooden trough on a bed of straw, covered with an ill-smelling sheepskin, water dripping on me from the walls and ceiling, bits of rye dumplings and

beans cooked in lard waging war on my digestive organs—then, I must confess, I began to be disheartened. But when, early this morning, the disc of the sun rose over the meadows, revealing the wintry mountains in their royal robes of purple against the clear, blue sky, while in the ravines below and in the valleys outside lay the leaden mass of mist—then I could not refrain from shouting for joy. My housefather expressed amazement in his face, that there could be such a creature nowadays as a farmhand who shouts for joy. Formerly they existed, it is true, but now the labourers seem rather inclined to curse. They consider it more aristocratic. To speak frankly, I have no idea of abstaining from swearing. If it relieves the heart, why not? And how does it differ from an angry prayer? Thou seest I am already beginning to apologise for the sins of the peasantry. If I could only familiarise myself with their excellent qualities as easily, then at the next agricultural exposition I should receive a first prize and be placed in the cabinet of curiosities. Walk up and see, ladies and gentlemen! Behold the eighth wonder of the world: a city-bred man turned peasant! Ah, well, these are only journalist's jests. I think that the odours of the stable will prove a sufficient disinfectant to prevent the disease from getting the upper hand of me again.

My housefather has no idea of what a monster he is harbouring under his roof. The next time I will tell thee about the house and these people. This letter must go now.

I implore thee, Professor, dear Doctor of Philosophy, do not desert me!

Thy HANS.

ADAMSHAUS, Fifth Sunday.

Thanks, my friend, my eternal thanks for thy letter and for thine encouragement. I am also grateful to thee for not having called me a fool. I could bear anything better than that. I trust my strength of purpose will not fail me. So I am to be in "God's school" for one year! Thou couldst not have expressed it better. It was pity that first drew me to this house and it is quite in keeping with the need for it.

Thou already knowest how, a few weeks ago, the meal-sack was taken from the shoulders of an exhausted man and carried up to his house. It was the same Adam to whom the teacher had referred a short time before. His farm, high up on the brow of the mountain, spreads out in an almost lordly fashion under some old sycamore-trees. As we entered the house, the peasant, pointing towards me with both hands, said to his wife in a panting voice:

"This man, had he wished to, might have gone to the devil with my meal, and I could not have followed him to-day. I 've got it again, mother! Bring me my smoke!"

And the woman replied: "Just as I always said,—utter strangers are kinder than one's neighbours."

She then took a tin pan of glowing embers, scattered some dried herbs upon it, and held it before

the face of her husband, who had sunk into an arm-chair. After inhaling the rising smoke for a few moments, he pressed his hand against his breast and, taking one long breath, said: "Thank God, it is over for this time!"

I inquired what they were burning in the pan.

"Witches-weed," answered the woman.

"It 's not so bad as it sounds," added the man; "there 's no better remedy for asthma. Now you must take off your coat and rest, and knock the snow from your boots or they will wet through. Winter is here at last; we almost thought we were not to have any this year."

"If you are suffering from asthma, should you not spare yourself and send a farmhand to the mill?" said I.

"A farmhand! Did I not do that? That is exactly what I did do."

"True," continued his wife, "for he is his own farmhand. And the best one he has, too!"

Smoothing the grey hair down over his forehead, the man smiled at the joke that he was his own best farmhand. Soon I had learned the whole story. The oldest son is a soldier in Laibach. The other is lying in the adjoining room, moaning.

"He has been shot and badly wounded," said the woman.

"Who, the soldier?"

"No, the other one. Things are not as they should be in this world."

"Never mind, mother," said the man in a reprov-

ing voice. "I would rather have things as they are. It might have turned out much worse. He might be in prison now instead of lying in there; he might have lost his head completely, for when placed in such a predicament before a hunter, God might have deserted him if questions had been asked."

"What difference would it make?" cried the woman excitedly, her crooked old arms trembling. "If in the army they teach one of our boys to shoot people, the other one ought to be allowed at least to defend himself!"

"Mother," said her husband appeasingly, "thou must not feel so bitter about it. Even if the wound smarts, even if the wound smarts, thou shouldst not always be pouring acid upon it. Go, get a little milk now and warm it for this man here, who has been so good as to carry my meal for me. I must go to the cows."

"Have you a large farm?" I asked.

"It is too small to boast of and too large to manage."

"Then you should hire a man to help you."

"Hire him!" screamed the woman, with a derisive laugh. "That is easy to say."

"There is no one to be had," added the man.

"Perhaps a farmhand might be found, after all," I replied.

"But no family who could afford to pay him his price!" said he.

"And no family who could feed and clothe him well enough!" added the woman.

"The labourers do nothing but plunder us nowadays," said Adam.

And his wife continued: "Nothing is good enough for them. Last summer at the haying we had a treasure of that sort, a two-legged one. And he was from this neighbourhood, too,—a soldier who had served out his term. In the army he had borne all kinds of humiliation from his colonel, but here he would not listen to one word of reproof from the housefather. Such farmhands! I would rather work all day and night myself. It is also a fact, in the barracks he put up with hunger, but here he would upset the dish of potatoes on the table and say it was food fit only for the pigs. In all my life I never saw anyone despise my food as he did. He will remember that some day, and he will also remember that I told him so!"

"Don't get excited, mother," the peasant again said in an appeasing voice. "A man is to be pitied whose stomach is so weak that it cannot digest even a fried potato cake! Not even a fried potato cake!"

Now I made a bold move. "Good people, I wonder if I could be of use to you! I have already tried various kinds of work in this world, and more hard than easy, so farm work will not kill me, even though I was not born to it. What a man does not know he can learn, and what he does not like he can accustom himself to. I will not complain about the food and lodging, and I will take whatever wages you can pay. And I do not mean by this that I am merely seeking a shelter for the winter; I will remain

with you through the summer and will not grumble, no matter how hard the work may be. I am in earnest, my good people, and if you agree to it, I will stay with you."

So, my friend, I made the plunge, and was I not brave? And while doing it I never once thought of my pledge, but rather that I was sorry for the poor wretches; you see how tremendously magnanimous I have grown! After I had finished speaking, they sat before me staring at one another steadily. The man's hands were folded across his stomach, and at last he succeeded in stammering: "I hardly know what is happening to me."

But his wife made a much more striking remark: "Surely a rascal could not promise more." To which her husband replied: "Don't be foolish, mother. If he were a bad man he would have run off with my meal down there on the Brandlahn. Dost thou not remember how last year the cheese was stolen from Gleimer-Stindl? Our God is far above us and the policeman far away."

It was a veritable judgment that I was obliged to hear passed upon me. After the pair had inquired about various things, and not last of all concerning my religious faith, they finally agreed that this stranger must have been sent directly from St. Notburga, to whom, as I now know, they pray every evening for help.

"We will agree to it," said Adam at last, "if you do it of your own free will—and I will say 'thou' to thee at once. But to bind thee for the entire

year, no! To-day it is agreeable to thee here in the warm room: to-morrow, however, the weather may be fine and thy feet will have had a good rest. Still, if thou shouldst decide to stay, our custom has been to give forty *Gulden* a year wages, besides clothing. To be sure, it is not much. Stay as long as thou wilt."

So, old friend, thou hast made the acquaintance of my new master and mistress. Wouldst thou like to see the farm also? Upon the summit of a mountain spur it nestles cosily, with its brown wooden walls and wide, projecting roof. In front of the house the fields and meadows slope down to the brook in the narrow valley below; beside it stand bare trees, which in summer will doubtless be green; behind it, towards the mountain-pastures, is a scanty pine forest; at one side is a field overgrown with underbrush extending to the brink of a ravine, where under an ancient fir-tree is a second building, also belonging to the farm, although now empty. The doors of the house are so arranged that one must bow one's head on entering, or else run the risk of fracturing one's skull. And even the windows, with their cross-bars of iron, are so low that only in a position of humility can one look out into the wide world. Upon the main beam in the living-room of Adamshaus is carved the date 1650. There is nothing contemptible about that! The large room serves as kitchen, dining-, and living-room for everyone, even the hens, whose coop is in a niche in the wall near the fireplace. Then there are, besides, a

few small bedrooms and provision-closets. Against the outer wall of the house are some beehives, now empty. The stalls and barns are commodious and show signs of a large farm in earlier days. So, now thou knowest my present home.

I have been given a tiny room next to the ox-stall, belonging to Valentl. If he should happen home on a furlough, I should have to move out. The interior of this apartment I will describe to thee later, but my calling must come first. The housefather at once showed me all his treasures: hay, straw, corn, oats, flax, hemp, and with especial pride he pointed out the huge dunghill in the yard. It is going to be a difficult task. At present I cannot distinguish rye from barley, or flax from hemp. I think the care of the stock will, in some respects, be easier to learn, although I cannot yet comprehend how one is to tell the difference between two black lambs or two spotted calves of the same size. The other inmates of the house know them at a glance, and it seems that, for the initiated, animals have as much individuality as people. A shepherd knows each sheep in a flock of a hundred.

My first duty was feeding the oxen, calves, and sheep. But that does not consist in merely throwing hay or chopped straw to them, as is done in a third-rate menagerie. Domestic animals have their history, their civilisation, their duties, and their rights, and are in nowise disposed to be treated like wild brutes. So every day they have their regular hours for meals, and their food must be carefully

prepared from hay, turnips, an infusion of dried leaves, and *Heublumen*,[1] salt, etc., all the more difficult a task for the novice, as there are neither recipes nor cook-books to consult.

And now let me tell thee, philosopher, that this is nothing, not even a beginning of all there is to learn. From the occasional remarks which my housefather has already dropped, I see that the knowledge of the peasant is quite a respectable science in itself—and I mean it in all seriousness. It is an art as well, for it must not only be understood, it must be put into practice. There is where the trouble lies. When the political economist sets forth his ideas in a newspaper article, not even a cat is the wiser for it, yet the writer is a scholar. But if the peasant makes a mistake, his hay rots in the barn, his grain moulds in the sack, his cattle die in the stalls. Ah, my good peasant, that is another story!

But now I must tell thee something more about my first day here. It made a profound impression upon me. After the housemother had started the fire, we seated ourselves upon benches and blocks about the hearth, for had we remained standing our heads would have been enveloped in a cloud of smoke. This smoke escapes slowly through a little window into the shed, whence it is carried by a sort of wooden flue out upon the roof. The housefather was busy oiling a pair of thick boots, the housemother was frying potatoes, and to me was allotted the task of cutting slices from a huge loaf of black

[1] A flower which blossoms during the haying season.

bread to break into the soup, of which our supper was to consist. We were not exactly sociable. The work of cutting the bread prevented the time from hanging heavy on my hands. The housemother, noticing my awkwardness, said: "Thou, thou—what is thy name then?"

"Hans, if agreeable to thee."

"Thou, Hansel, see here, thy pieces of bread are too thick! Thou art not doing it right."

Alas for thee, farmhand! If thou canst not even cut the bread, how canst thou ever earn it?

Someone suddenly called to the woman from the adjoining room. She went in, and through the open door I could see that the interior was very orderly and arranged almost like a chapel. The table was covered with a white cloth, upon which stood a glass containing oil and a burning taper. On the shelf were pictures of saints and little gaily painted vases of Bohemian glass. Close by was the high bed, where a young man was propped up on the pillows. His right hand, which was bandaged, was lying on the blue coverlet. His face was smooth, fine, and white as a piece of Italian marble; his eyes were large and dark; the suspicion of a moustache showed itself, and white teeth gleamed between his quivering lips; he was running his left hand through the tumbled mass of luxuriant brown hair. How one sometimes takes in everything at a glance! He was a superbly handsome youth.

He called to his mother: "Is Barbel there?"

"What dost thou want of her, Rocherl?"

"It pains me so again."

"Cheer up, child," said his mother. "I 'll put on some fresh cobbler's wax and bind it all up nicely."

"Thank thee, mother; but Barbel—she, she must do it. It hurts less when she does it."

"She is still busy with her *haarkampen* out in the shed."

Now, my dear Professor, thou dost not know what *haarkampen* means. It is hatchelling flax, that is, separating it from the tow. At last I know more than thou, which is a comfort!

I entered the adjoining room and looked at the bullet-wound in the young man's hand. On the back of the wrist was a round hole filled with congealed blood, and the surrounding skin was badly inflamed. They had just taken off the plaster, a black, tough, sticky mass. In reply to my question whether the bullet had already been removed, they said that the cobbler's wax would draw it out.

Then the girl came into the room. Even she was obliged to bend to enter the doorway, she was so tall. Instead of bending her neck, however, she bent her knees—one little courtesy and she was inside. How is it possible for people to grow up slender and straight, when they must double themselves together so many times a day? She carried skeins of flax over her arm, and these she laid carefully upon the back of a chair. On her head she wore an old, worn-out felt hat, which, with a quick motion, she hung up on a nail.

"What a good child thou art, Barbel, to take such care of my wedding hat!" praised the housefather. "Yes, yes, in that hat I led thy mother to the altar. Then there was a nice new feather on it, and now it is moth-eaten. But with a bright young face under it even a shabby hat is beautiful. Come now, I must have my little fun sometimes."

This good-natured pride in his wedding hat and in his daughter became the old man charmingly. Just on that account one would have to love him. But now I turned to look at Barbel. Ye Heavenly Powers, Doctor, but there is a girl for thee!

HANS.

ADAMSHAUS, Sixth Sunday.

I believe I was telling thee about the girl when I stopped the last time. In thy dining-room hangs her portrait. It is called *The Sistine Madonna*, and really there is nothing but the child lacking about our Barbel to make it a perfect likeness. In the city such a beautiful creature would be impossible. Yes, I say impossible! The greedy eyes of the men would soon wither this lovely spirit. There is something like the bloom of the grape about her still, and those eyes would destroy this bloom, would spoil these rose-bud lips; they would long since have transformed this pure, honest soul into that of a coquette. There is no city, no palace good enough for this girl, and no man, neither thou nor—I. I stand aside and gaze reverently at this simple creature, who has scarcely spoken thirty words to me in

three weeks. Strange, that she should be so serious and reserved when she has blossomed thus gloriously! Rocherl, her wounded brother, is the only one whom she caresses or with whom she jests. When Barbel is with him the bullet ceases to give him pain; he laughs and jokes and gazes with so much confidence into the Madonna face that I am thankful for all the cracks in the walls and doors, although the wind does blow through them in a most aggravating manner. I cannot imagine a more fascinating peep-show.

Yesterday she knelt beside his bed and, stroking the bandaged arm, said caressingly: "Poor little hand! If thou wilt be good and not hurt, I will reward thee with something nice."

"But if the bullet should not come out?" said Rocherl.

"Then it shall stay in. A man has so many bones in his body that surely he ought to be able to stand a bit of lead," she retorted, smiling.

"That which does not belong there is no good," he replied sadly.

"Thou must not lose courage, Rocherl," she said soothingly; "everything has something about it which does not belong there. Thou must not be discouraged."

Sometimes she portrays to him every imaginable sorrow of mortal man, that by contemplating these his own trouble may be easier to bear.

My pen shall now take an excursion into other fields, that my diary may gradually become more

complete. The day before Candlemas an old man came up here from Hoisendorf and, stopping in front of the house, made a speech, the first part of which I did not understand, while the other half I have forgotten. I think he said something about the Mother of God and the saints, but the main point was—money. He was going from house to house collecting money to buy altar candles for the parish church in Hoisendorf, that lights might be burned at every service during the year. First he went up to our housefather and, holding out a little blue-painted box, he repeated the following words: "Our Beloved Lady sends me to thy highly honoured hut to ask for a Candlemas offering."

The housefather took down an old leathern purse from the shelf, drew out a coin, which he kissed reverently and laid into the box. The collector picked it out, examined it carefully on both sides, saying: "Adam, usually thou givest a twenty."

"Yet this is something, this is something," said the peasant.

"That may be, but what a something! Formerly thou gavest twenty *Kreuzer*, and to-day only twenty *Heller!* Look here, Adam, nickels will not be accepted by the Church."

"But we have no more silver," said my housefather deliberately. "In these hard times, I think the Mother of Heaven will willingly put up with fewer candles at mass."

"Fewer candles! Come, now, it would never do for us to leave the Mother of God in the dark! I

see that I shall have to apply to this Christian benefactress here. Mistress Adam, most honoured, our Beloved Lady sends me to thy hut to ask for a Candlemas offering."

The housemother gave a ten-*Heller* nickel, on condition that a special candle should be established in the church to burn before the image of her guardian angel.

"A candle established! With that small amount! Thou art becoming witty, Mistress Adam!"

After this contemptuous remark the man entered the next room, where Rocherl was sitting on the bed, and repeated his message. The lad grew red in the face, although usually so pale, and looked about him helplessly. Apparently he had nothing to give.

Here Barbel interrupted: "Wait a moment, I have some money which I have saved." From out her clothes-press she fetched a little coin. The old man looked at it, then smacked his lips: "Ha, here is one after all! Adam, thy pretty daughter keeps the silver, it seems. Well, I would if I were in her place. Ought there not to be two of them for the nest? But if thou hast it not, then it is all right as it is. God bless thee for it, young woman! And I wish thee great happiness! A good husband and a houseful of children besides! For every *Heller* a girl, for every *Kreuzer* a boy, then thou wilt have a lively time of it!"

As the girl was hurriedly leaving the room, the Candlemas collector suddenly caught sight of the

schoolboy, Franzel. That he might show himself off in his clean white shirt-sleeves, and also because he enjoyed listening to the funny old beggar, he had been incautiously standing around until at last he, too, was caught and forced to succumb to his fate. But he made little ado about it; he put his hand into his pocket and gave the man two *Heller*. And he did this with the air of having a pocket full of treasures. In reality it was all the money he possessed, earned by acting as errand boy to the schoolhouse, for he carries eggs and other things down to the village occasionally.

Finally, when all the others had been plundered, the old croaker stepped up to me, mumbling: "Is this man not going to give anything?"

I handed him a ten-*Kreuzer* piece and said something about a *Trinkgeld*. How that aroused his ire! He held the coin in his broad, wrinkled hand and cried:

"A *Trinkgeld!* What for? Dost thou think that I am going about begging for a *Trinkgeld* like a night-watchman on New Year's Eve? Knave! What kind of a man art thou to need no candles? *Herrgott!* Thou villain, thou! Take the thing back! Take it back!"

"Come, now, I meant no harm," I said.

"Take it away, I say!"

"But I intended it for a Christian offering to the Church."

"We don't need it!" With this cry he threw the money upon the floor with so much force that the

coin expressed its indignation by once or twice rebounding towards us.

"*Trinkgeld*, like a night-watchman!" He almost spat the words at me.

And now my housefather took me under his protection: "Thou must not talk so, Schragerer; this is our new farmhand from distant parts. He does not understand the sacred customs yet, but he prays diligently."

Then the man picked up the coin and put it into his box, and after half singing, half reciting a rhymed speech, he left the house with great dignity.

This last episode strikes me as very pathetic. To think that these poor people should be obliged to contribute money for the consecrated lights on the altar! At the Candlemas service, which I attended with the housefather, we beheld all the solemn ceremony of dedicating the new candles, accompanied by a great illumination and organ music. The schoolmaster, with a candle in his hand and repeating Latin phrases, assisted at the service. This man has a grudge against me. Am I in possession of some secret of his? As our eyes met, I greeted him, but no spark of friendship was to be seen in his glance.

In regard to my master's remark about the "diligent praying" of his new farmhand, I do not endorse it without some qualifications. Imagine a man, accustomed to spend the first part of every evening at the *Roten Krug*, with a roast and a glass of beer before him, then later at a *café*, surrounded by jovial companions, being now obliged, at this

same hour, to kneel upon a stool, his elbows resting on the edge of the table, mumbling the litany and telling his beads with a family of peasants! Just imagine it! No, thou couldst not; it would be impossible! The devil has always shown good taste. If he cannot be driven away by any other means, prayer usually disposes of him. The evening family prayer lasts about forty minutes on work-days, and on Sundays and holidays nearly an hour. My bagful of worldly sins, that were pressed down and running over, must surely be atoned for now. But not by prayer, for my devotions would be worth little more to the dear God than my ten-*Kreuzer* piece was worth to old Schragerer; nor by kneeling on the hard board, where I crouch like a quadruped; but everything will be atoned for by my heroic efforts to restrain my desire to laugh. Hast thou ever heard peasants pray? From a serious point of view there is certainly nothing comical in the pious murmuring and the droning voices of these simple souls; but a city bird like myself is the naughtiest, most frivolous, and most intolerant being in all creation. Only by degrees have I learned to suspect, O friend, the sore hearts that are carried by these poor people, when they pray with folded hands and closed eyes.

They frequently follow the spiritual advice, "Work and pray," for during the psalter the housefather makes tapers, the housemother cooks, Barbel spins, Rocherl and Franzel wash the beans for tomorrow's dinner. And the new farmhand? Sitting

on his calves, like a Turk, he mumbles the words with the others, at the same time endeavouring to conceal the fact that neither the Lord's Prayer nor the *Ave Maria* is familiar to him. Yet my mother once folded these hands, when they were small, and taught me to repeat: "Our Father which art in heaven!" During my school days the catechist used to examine me about these things, but later, in the army and at the office of *The Continental*, no further questions were asked.

What if my ignorance should be discovered! I have, however, already received a few reproofs for my conduct. My incurable awkwardness at my work is no longer laid up against me; but that the new "hand" does not cross himself on his forehead, mouth, and breast with his thumb, either before or after meals; that he holds his fork with his left hand when eating dumplings; that he will not sip the roasted-meal porridge (the peasant's coffee) from a common dish, but takes it first upon his own plate; that he wears the same suit of clothes Sundays and work-days; that he washes himself daily with soap, and even scours his teeth with a little brush; that he lets his beard grow instead of shaving himself neatly every Sunday,— for these and for other misdemeanours my housefather has once or twice kindly reproved me, and my housemother has upbraided me in much sharper language.

"Thou, Hansel," she said a couple of days ago, "Thou wilt spoil our children with thy vanity! And especially now, when the young people already have

all sorts of notions in their heads. I tell thee, Hansel, when my little Franzel brings home with him one of those outlandish tooth-brushes, then thou canst just look for another place. I won't stand it!"

What dost thou think,—would not these stubborn facts make a good subject for the *Fliegende Blätter?* But no, I will not hold up my mental and spiritual conflict of this year for the whole world to ridicule. And, really, do not these people get on very well as they are? My housefather cleans his teeth every morning with a hemp rag; he combs his hair with his five fingers; for a drinking-cup at the spring he uses the bent brim of his hat or the hollow of his hand. From their standpoint they lack for nothing, —they have everything. Before a peasant will complain he is already near starvation. And I have been thinking to myself, that there are two occasions when mankind has no wants: the first, when he is in a state of barbarism, the second, when he is in the highest stages of civilisation. That which comes between—God pity us! Every wish of the worldling breeds seven new ones in the moment of fulfilment, and our wishes are so countless that there is no such thing as pleasure.

There was an example of this here last week. It was a man whom the people call *Kramerzodl,* but not in a spirit of raillery; it is simply their way of expressing the word "pedler." To be sure, this man had no green bundle with him, but instead an illustrated catalogue, showing a large assortment of

beautiful things. He tried to induce the housemother to buy a red upholstered sofa. She replied that the peasant's house had no need of a couch for lazy folks; he might lie down on that himself. Whereupon the ambitious tradesman complained of the lack of culture in these people, and turning to me he said that having no wants was a sure sign of barbarity: the higher the civilisation the greater the needs.

Oh, Doctor! I should not like to wager that a certain Hans Trautendorffer did not at one time publish ideas similar to these. Now I longed to be sufficiently uncultured to kick this *Kramerzodl* out of the house. Is it not rather the highest culture when a man enjoys what he has instead of missing what he has not? And when he knows how so to systemise his wants that they may be met naturally and without an undue expenditure of strength and independence of spirit? He who creates artificial needs, as is the result of a great part of our industry and trade, creates discontent. A man who allows himself to be led aside from the simple native joys of life into the superfluous luxuries of a modern existence soon becomes sated and dissatisfied at the same time. Why wish to cultivate in the poor man a thousand fancies and a thousand desires for pleasure, when two arms for work and one heart for enjoyment have hitherto sufficed? Pleasures which are beyond the means earned by two arms and one brain must be paid for at a sacrifice of moral worth. The perfect man possesses nothing and enjoys every-

thing. For him who can rest as well on a wooden bench or a stone floor as on a soft couch, the world is full of couches; for him whose thirst is as well satisfied by a draught of spring-water as by the choicest Johannesberger, every mountain sends forth a stream of Rhine wine.

"And thou sayest that?" I hear thee ask, my friend. Yes, thus speaks a man not living in luxury, but suffering severe privation among people who in their own opinion want for nothing. I often heave a deep sigh in thinking of my preconceived ideas of "civilisation."

Yesterday, after a terrible night, I packed up my bundle to run away. But when all was ready and nothing remained for me to do but to cross the threshold, it occurred to me: See, how easily that is done! And thou canst go just as easily an hour hence, or to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow. I could not endure it did I not feel free to go at any moment. But since I am free!—I threw my bundle back into the chest.

God's school! No, I will not play truant.

Thy HANS.

Seventh Sunday.

Dear Friend and Philosopher:

I wonder what thou art doing at three o'clock in the morning! I imagine thee as going home from a ball, or as playing billiards in a *café;* or perhaps as already snugly settled in bed, preparing for sleep by reading the work of some great thinker and by

smoking a well-seasoned cigar. With me at Adamshaus, my attention is called to this late "evening" hour by my housefather rapping with a stick of wood on my wall: "Time to get up!" At first I took this very tragically and sprang from my straw bed as if the house were on fire. Now I let the good Adam knock twice, and yesterday even three times, until at last he called: "Hansel! I think it never too early to get up nowadays." The hands of my watch pointed to a quarter past three.

They do not say much about the cold here. The only barometer they ever mention is the gout. Rising in this freezing atmosphere sharpens one's appetite for the hot roasted-meal coffee. But it is not ready yet. First we must thresh for three hours on the barn floor. The light from the candle, which is fastened by a nail to the wall, seems to be constantly twinkling as we swing our flails through the air. For thine instruction I will tell thee that the barn floor is strewn with sheaves of oats. We four, the housefather, the housemother, Barbel, and I, our hands covered with lamb's-wool mittens, beat the straw as rhythmically as a Klopstock ode in trochaics, to be sure to extract even the last bits of grain, and to mash it into feed for the cattle. Learning the art of threshing has cost the old journalist comparatively little trouble.

Deeply engaged in our work we are all very quiet, so I compose verses to myself—keeping time with the flail. They are songs of defiance about Barbel. She might at least cease being so haughty. Of

course, I am only a poor "farmhand from distant parts," who for all the world would not make a declaration of love to her, even if she should once happen to pronounce the name of Hans. True, she hardly speaks to the others either—which cannot always have been the case, as her mother manifests surprise at it. But perhaps—in spite of all—who can tell! Perhaps— In the evening before the fire I sometimes tell stories. One night I told them the legend of the dumb princess, who had always laughed and chatted until one day when out hunting she saw a shepherd. Thenceforth she laughed no more, spoke no more—she was dumb. Every remedy proved useless, until at last a magician brought the young shepherd, who possessed the power to make the dumb speak. He laid his hands on the shoulders of the princess, gazed into her eyes, and asked: "Dost thou love me?" "Yes," was her reply, and from this moment she was healed. Dost thou think that Barbel even so much as winked an eyelid at this pretty story? No.

Thou must already have been struck by the fact that my pen always gravitates in a certain direction. I try to turn it aside, but it is forever gliding back again towards this strange northern light. What if I should write a romance! Doctor! Doctor!

Nonsense! At six o'clock Rocherl whistles for us to come to breakfast. Since he cannot thresh he makes our coffee. Ah me! I could drink the very word! For thine instruction: Roasted corn-meal, boiled in water with a little butter and caraway. It

is hopeless to think of having real coffee here. Several years ago a seamstress made some coffee in this house, genuine coffee! And the family seem to date things from that epoch. "At that time when we drank the coffee"; "In the year we had the coffee." To show my vast wisdom I once told them that in large cities there were special coffee-houses, where year in, year out, nothing was made but coffee. Whereupon my housefather remarked—although he was smiling good-naturedly all the time, so as not to hurt my feelings—that whether I could do anything else or not, I at least knew how to brag. Thus far, my friend, are we removed from coffee here!

Thou, being a kind of wine-bibber, probably thinkest that among the peasantry fresh milk takes the place of the glorious beverage. Listen: The milk, from which every particle of cream has been taken, has been standing for weeks in great tubs in the cellar. A few boards are laid across them to prevent any *large* vermin from falling in. In the winter, with the poor feed, the cows give but little milk, so we must make use of that in the cellar, and often it is "sour" or "smoked," and the cook is always thankful when nothing worse than this happens to the porridge. Shame upon me! Here I am sneering at the food behind their backs, and when I wipe off my spoon I always say, "*Vergelt's Gott!*" (God bless you for it).

After breakfast I go to my oxen, Barbel to her cows, and Rocherl to the sheep. On week-days the cattle are given a meal of two courses, on Sundays,

three, then they are led to the spring, which is in the yard between the house and the barn, and which the housefather is first obliged to free from ice. The housemother busies herself with getting the little boy off to school, and then the threshing begins again and lasts until dinner at eleven o'clock. *Menu:* Bread soup made from the above-mentioned milk, cabbage with bacon, rye dumplings with smoked meat. The food itself is wholesome and good, but the way it is cooked—that is indescribably bad. I would rather tell thee of something pleasant, of how modestly and deliberately these people dip into the common dish, no one trying to take more than his share. This considerate manner at table I have found everywhere among the peasants, and the diners at *table d'hôte* in our fine hotels might well imitate it.

In the afternoon there is more threshing. We must finish it before Lent, Adam says, just as if it were a dancing party. For thine instruction: The straw goes into the barn, the grain into the sieve, then to the grist-mill, and last of all into the oven. Wouldst thou like a piece of oat bread? My housefather says: "Oat bread is good, but pork is better!" So he gives the oat-meal to the pigs, or he sells the oats by the bag, or keeps enough for seed to last a century. Wait, the day's work is not yet over. At twilight Barbel goes to her cows, and anyone listening at the door may hear the little stream running into the pail. In the evening we gather about the fire, each busy with some small task.

And what dost thou suppose mine is? If a leg has come off from a chair, or a ladder has lost a rung, or when the carving-knife is notched, or the axe is dulled, the yoke for the oxen broken, the door-latch out of order—then I take hold. When the others are so busy, I should be ashamed were I able to do nothing but fold my hands and stand around in their way.

Never before in all my earthly pilgrimage have I been ashamed, not even when the sergeant-major gave me an ovation by singing the most stirring barrack songs, nor when the editor-in-chief suddenly said to me: "Permit me, Herr Trautendorffer, I find a defect in your work," and he pointed out an unmistakable error in grammar. I was delightfully obdurate in those days, but here I am ashamed,—and with this I end my day's work.

Next comes supper: Potatoes, turnips, or porridge; then prayers, and at eight o'clock, just as city people are beginning to be lively, we crawl into bed. This is the working-day. Sundays, after feeding the stock, we go to church. I sometimes take a walk or I write to my Alfred.

My tallow-candle (in Hoisendorf they cost twenty-one *Kreuzer* a pound) is not yet burned out, so I will write thee about our neighbour Schlappzopf. For thou must make the acquaintance of the other people here also. A few days ago, as we had been butchering, I carried the hide of a pig to Schlappzopf to dress. I found him interviewing a cattle-trader from the upper Gai.

"Schlappzopf," said the latter, "I 've heard that you have a cow to sell. "

The peasant was busy with his pipe and seemed not to hear the question.

"A cow, Schlappzopf, have n't you?"

"A cow? I don't know."

"Is it a young one? Of course it is a milch-cow?"

"I am not sure of it. Perhaps she is and perhaps she is n't," he replied, screwing the stem into his pipe.

"Will you show her to me?"

"Why, yes, we might take a look at her. It costs nothing to look at her." Then he led the cattle-trader through the damp, close stable.

"Which one is it, then?"

"I must think it over first and see. I could hardly let the milch-cow go; it might not suit my wife."

"Well, the one with calf."

The peasant poked the tobacco in his pipe, emptied a little pile of ashes into the hollow of his hand, and scattered them deliberately upon the ground.

"Then I will take the one with calf. How's that?" said the trader.

Schlappzopf removed the stem from his pipe, slowly raised it to his lips, and blew through it. "The one with calf?" he asked. "Oh, no, that one I could n't spare anyhow."

"So you have only the one fattened in the stall?"

" Well, the fact is, she is n't quite fat yet. Of course, I shall have to sell her sometime."

"What does she cost?"

The peasant put his pipe together again, stuck it into his mouth, and took a few whiffs. The draught was now in order.

"How many bank-notes shall I pay you for the cow?"

"My neighbour Kulmbock sold one for a hundred and fifty last week."

"But she was surely twice as heavy as this one here!"

"A little heavier, perhaps, but not much, not much."

"A round hundred, if you will take it!"

The peasant deliberately pulled at his tobacco-pouch, which hung at the back of his belt, tipped it over, and with two fingers stuffed some tobacco into his pipe.

"Do you hear, Schlappzopf? A hundred *Gulden* for the creature. She really ought to be fed in the stall a few weeks longer, but as I happen to be in the mood, I 'll take her with me to-day."

The pipe was filled at last, and the peasant found time to say: "That 's just what you will not do."

"Don't think it over too long, Schlappzopf. Fortune knocks but once at your door, then it goes by. If I should say a hundred and five, I would be crazy. But I 'll do it, that we may trade together again in the future."

The peasant did not allow his eyes to wander from his pipe and with a scarcely perceptible shake of the head he replied: "I believe I 'll keep her a while longer."

"Well, how much do you want, then?"

Schlappzopf took out his tinder and flint and succeeded in getting a few sparks, although it refused to burn. Finally he opened his mouth, not, however, to name the price of the cow, but to blow the flame.

"A hundred and five and earnest-money for your wife. But you must decide quickly; I might change my mind." The trader examined the cow to see if the skin were loose or if the flesh were springy. "She 's a tough beast. I don't know as I want her after all. But I 'll take her, since I 've given my word. Well?"

The peasant lighted his pipe, and after it had begun to draw properly he at last said in a decided manner: "I think I won't sell any of my cows."

This extended transaction had three stages. In the first the peasant did not know which cow to dispose of; in the second, he did not know what price to ask; in the third, he finally resolved to sell none at all. And to reach this decision it had required more than an hour.

This, my friend, is an example of that type of vacillation and indifference which is fatal. The very next day Schlappzopf hunted up the cattle-trader and sold him the cow for one hundred *Gulden.* When I return to the world again, that is, thy world, an article shall appear in *The Continental* on the subject of the *Dorfting.*[1] On the wall of every parish-house should hang a slate where the peasants

[1] *Dorfting*, a village court of justice.

and the traders can advertise their wants; expert economists would realise the advantage of this. And the *Dorfting* should arrange all sales between the producer and the buyer, and the "middle-man" may go to the devil.

From my observations I judge that the peasants are not the most conscientious people in the world at cattle-trading. They are perfectly honest in regard to their productive labour: in trade they are rogues, the same here as in the outside world. My Adam swapped cows with the peasant Nansen. Adam had assured Nansen that his cow gave three measures of milk, but he very shrewdly refrained from saying within what time. Nansen had told Adam that his cow was with calf—he had just laid a bundle of straw across her back. The peasant never gives his word of honour, but says "he stands fair." If he says, "I stand fair for this or that," then he can be trusted to a certain extent. So Adam said: "Dost thou stand fair, Nans, that the cow is with calf?" Nans answered indifferently: "I 'll not stand fair until the ice melts; now it is too slippery." And my housefather was in the same difficulty with his milch-cow. So with all possible good-nature they dupe one another, and the trader's conscience troubles him only when he is obliged to say to himself: "I was more stupid this time than the other man."

I have made an amazing discovery. The mountain peasants of the old stamp have no idea of the flight of time. But, all the same, they discuss poli-

tics in the calmest manner in the Hoisendorf tavern. For example, they say: "The Russians are coming, and since they object to large cities, they will burn them all down, as they once burned their own capital, Moscow. The Jews are to be exterminated and their money divided among the poor peasants. The Chinese are also going to be exterminated, and the German Emperor is to have long whips made out of their pigtails—for the Social Democrats. The Holy Father has forbidden the nations to go to war, and if one should begin all the others would be obliged to unite against it." They still have the greatest horror of the "arch-fiend" Napoleon; they build all their hopes upon Emperor Joseph II., "who sleeps in a mountain cavern and will re-awaken when cherry-trees bloom at Christmas."

Sometimes the peasant is told that now everyone must become German. At this he shakes his head. He had always believed that, with the exception of a few pedlers and Frenchmen, the whole world was composed of Germans.

The people of Almgai show considerable interest in inventions and discoveries, and their ludicrous ideas on the subject they occasionally express in words: Some imagine the telegraph to be a simple bell-rope, and that by pulling this rope in Salzburg the bell will ring in Vienna. The lightning-rod is a magnet which draws the lightning, then impales it. In large cities the lightning collected from these rods is stored in gigantic vats, and from this store the electric light is made. There are fast trains called

lightning trains, because they are drawn by lightning; these are the electric cars. In America there is a great deal of money, but the road leading thither is wet; one cannot walk there, even in water-tight boots; one is obliged to board a ship, which is often as large as a barn, and it has room enough inside to hold a whole churchful of people. The ships are made of iron, and never sink because the steam keeps them afloat. Such are the distorted ideas in their heads while their hands are doing their work as they should.

I have never noticed the least spite expressed by these people against the rich and aristocratic, although they speak of them frequently. "They undoubtedly have their own nuts to crack," they say. The peasant remarks, however, that the people outside are always quarrelling about something, what he does not know, but there will surely be winnings for someone, and perhaps a bit will fall to him as well.

Yes, my dear friend, these are facts! But my candle is burned out. I will go to bed and say "Good-morning" to thee.

Thy HANS.

Eighth Sunday.

If, dear friend, my letters, which are the outpourings of the innermost longings of my heart, really give thee pleasure, I am delighted. Thou sayest that everything that I write to thee is novel and instructive, and that I may be sure of thy warmest

sympathy, and that thou wilt accompany me as a faithful comrade through the joys and sorrows of this year. Noble friend! What encouragement that gives me! A bad seventh of the time is well over, and I hope to get through the remainder also. Only occasionally do I have the feeling of being exiled, but my indignation against my adversaries of *The Continental* increases from day to day. However, this acts as a tonic. Hast thou never noticed that even more is accomplished in this world when one is spurred on by anger and resentment than when one is incited by love?

The larger I loom in the eyes of Herr Stein von Stein, the smaller I become in Adamshaus. This last week I had another bad day. There were trees to be felled in the forest, for the winter has already made large inroads on our wood-pile by the house. On Friday—oh, these Fridays, they signify something, after all!—the housefather had work to do at the mill, so Barbel and I were sent into the forest. I asked, in great embarrassment, if Rocherl could not go with us.

"I should like to know what you need him for!" cried the housemother sharply. "With those few little trees you ought to be able to manage alone!" Chaperons it seems are unknown in these mountains!

So we set out, I with axe and wedge and the girl with the broad two-handled saw. The snow was deep and we sank to our knees. I strode on ahead, Barbel following, and we neither of us spoke a word. The low bushes brushed against us, shaking

the snow into our faces. A jay was screeching in the trees above.

"We might have chosen a more favourable time to cut wood," I finally remarked.

"To-day is all right for it," she answered, relapsing into silence.

Suddenly I heard a rattling noise against the saw over her shoulder; the branch of a fir-tree had flown back into her face with great force. She accepted it silently and as a matter of course that the trees should strike her when the farmhand ahead of her was careless about bending the boughs.

We finally reached the field where the bare tree-trunks were standing from which in the previous year the limbs had been stripped in order that they might dry. Selecting one of these trees we applied the saw, Barbel on one side, I on the other—but think, Doctor, it would not stir! She showed me how to hold it, how to place it, and how to move it; the very devil was in it, for the sharp-toothed steel would not budge. If I pulled it towards me, it refused to go back, and when I pressed against it with all my force, the flat monster bulged out and hissed at me with scornful sounds. At first I tried the effect of a few stale jokes, but they were in vain. Then Barbel calmly and patiently explained it all to me once more.

"It cannot be an art," said she, "for I have already felled the largest trees with the aid of little Franz. Thou art a bit awkward, Hansel, but it will go better soon."

O friend and Professor, how humiliated I was at this! I would willingly have given up all my knowledge of sociology and of the French language to boot, had I only been able to saw wood!

"How exasperating!" she said, but thou must not misunderstand this; what she meant by it was, "How troublesome!"

"Oh, I have it!" I exclaimed; "we don't need the old saw anyway. I will fell the tree with the axe!"

With all the sublimity of an old Teuton at the time of the battle of Hermann in the Teutoburgerwalde, I swung the axe and struck at the wood so vigorously that Barbel was obliged to step back to prevent the flying chips from hitting her in the face. She shall see just for once that I possess the strength of prehistoric man and am quite superior to such new-fangled things as saws, wedges, and the like. Sharp-toothed implements of steel may do very well for aged men, but we still have sinew and brawn in our arms.

What did this chit of a girl do then but begin to giggle! It was, however, not without charm, and I should have liked to set it to music at once. Her laugh is like a silver bell, provided that silver bells laugh.

"If we have to wait for a fire on our hearth until thou hast felled this tree with an axe, the water would freeze in the soup-dish and icicles would form on our noses."

This little speech of hers seemed to me full of

malice, and I replied: "It is all the same to me! I am accustomed to the cold. Some people might live in the tropics or close to the fire, and yet their every breath congeals with ice."

She looked at me in amazement, as if unable to comprehend the meaning of my remark. And I made the discovery that a fir-tree grows harder the deeper in one hews.

"We might try the saw once more," she proposed. Again it was proved that I could not fell trees—and I cannot!

"Thou, Hansel," she said suddenly, "I believe the most sensible thing for us to do would be to stop and go home."

Doctor, I implore thee, burn this letter!

Oh, yes, the rabbit! I must tell thee about the rabbit that ran across our path. From right to left, which always forbodes a misfortune. Wishing to distract me in my depressed mood, Barbel asked: "Dost thou know, Hansel, why the rabbit has a harelip?"

"Dost thou know?"

"Of course I know. When God created the world, the rabbit laughed at Him because the surface was uneven. And it laughed so hard that finally its snout was torn!" At this she laughed herself, and in such a clear, ringing voice that it made me hot to listen to her. It did not last long, it is true, and she once more resumed her wonted and almost melancholy gravity. *Mein Gott!* if only more rabbits would cross our path!

For one whole night and half a day I was quite broken up over my unsuccessful attempt at felling trees. Then the parish officer arrived with a tax-bill and an official document relating to the redemption of the land. The tax-bill is always like a hail-storm in the peasant's house, and it is perhaps well that there is such a thing as official language. "Pay at once! Thirty-five *Gulden* before next week at the latest, or we shall take away your cow!" Such lucidity would be too frightful. So the officials prefer to take a roundabout way, turning and twisting their clauses in the most complicated manner. Their documents are partly printed, partly in Latin, partly in something else, partly in brackets, partly in figures, partly in crudely formed letters, here written with a pen, there covered with stamps, so that the recipient can comprehend it only after great difficulty. He reads portions of it, endeavouring to decipher what it all means, until at last it gradually dawns on him: wherefore, how much, and at what time.

Now I have been able partially to counteract my failure at felling trees. I cheerfully set myself at the task of studying the two documents, and towards evening I barely made out what the praiseworthy officials in Kailing meant.

"'T is a very fine thing, that, when a man can read and write." With this praise my housefather rewarded me.

But my rising reputation was not without its flaws. A new cause of complaint was found against

me. Listen to my story: Only a short time ago my housefather came into the stable one morning and exclaimed: "Hansel, what is this? How does that strange ox come into the stall?"

"Strange ox! What dost thou mean?"

"Here stands a black-speckled steer, or whatever it is. It does not belong here! *Jesses!* What has become of our fallow ox? Where is our ox, man?"

I brought a candle, and sure enough, there in the stall stood an unfamiliar animal, mottled like the Pinzgauer breed. There were jet-black spots over its entire back.

"How is it possible?" I insisted. "The stable door is bolted all night."

"But the fallow ox is gone! As long as I have been a farmer a thing like this has never happened before. When it comes to such a pass that I cannot even trust thee to keep the cattle from being stolen from the stall, then thou mayest just—be stolen thyself!" The old man was not quite sarcastic enough to finish this cutting remark, but from the expression in his eyes I could interpret his meaning. At the same moment the mystery was solved.

I am accustomed to keep my inkbottle standing on a beam in the warm stable to prevent the ink from freezing. In the night a cat or a mouse must have knocked it down upon the back of the fallow ox.

"Ink, is it?" asked Adam. "Don't be foolish. Why should there be ink in the ox-stall?"

And now I was obliged to confess my secret occupation.

"Thou dost write letters! Letters! Well, hast thou an old mother, or who then?"

"My dear housefather," I said, "let us go to work and wash off the ox."

With hot water and lye and a rough rag we worked the entire morning, until the "Pinzgauer" ox was freed from his spots once more.

My housefather shook his head many times after this occurrence. The curse of ink in the peasant's home! Towards print there is also an instinctive antipathy. They think that when peasants once begin to meddle with books they will all soon be celebrating beggar's holiday.

Ninth Sunday.

Dear Doctor:

Yesterday noon, immediately after dinner, my housemother intimated in unmistakable language that I was to be dismissed. Not on account of my inability to fell trees, nor because the cattle under my care became spotted, but for reason of my shockingly long beard. If I could not appear a little more respectable, as was befitting a Christian, I might tell them what they owed me for the few weeks; spring was close at hand and then I might go.

All at once it occurred to me: They do not want me. They have only retained me till now out of charity, to keep me above ground through the cold winter months. And as for paying me there can be

no question of that. If they cannot make use of me for nothing, then they need only tell me frankly what they would require me to pay to be allowed to stay with them. I was just about to open my mouth to say the words, when an inner voice warned me: Don't do it! Don't do it! It would only arouse suspicion. It might spoil everything. I must submit like a slave, who belongs to his master, body and soul.

So Hansel replied meekly that as he possessed neither shears nor razor, he could neither cut his hair nor shave himself. If my long hair was so objectionable to the good housemother, then she would have to shear me herself.

At this she laughed aloud: "True," she said, "one cannot be cross with him. He always has such a jesting answer for everything. This evening, father, when thou hast time, take Hansel between thy knees and cut off his fur. The sheep-shears will answer."

Dost thou hear, philosopher? The sheep-shears will answer! Well, in the evening the shearing took place. I had staked my hopes on an attack of asthma, which the housefather often has at this hour. But he escaped—although I did not. I was obliged to sit down on a low, three-legged stool. Alas! for my beautiful, my nut-brown hair! It is the same "curly, golden hero's mane" which once —I believe it was in the second class—thou didst celebrate in faultless trochaics. It is gone! Under the feet of the barbarians lay the glorious locks,

until finally the housemother boldly gathered them up to bury them outside under the eaves. And notice one thing in connection with this incident, thou world-wise man: "He who would retain a good memory should bury his hair under the eaves!" A good memory! Surely I shall never forget this year!

Next came my Teutonic beard. The rusty shears bit, they tore, they squeaked around my cheeks and chin, while my head was wedged between the sharp knees of my dearly beloved housefather. He was very merry over it all.

"Hansel," he said suddenly, clutching one end of my moustache, "wilt thou be good? Wilt thou stay with us through the summer, until the haying and harvesting are done? Wilt thou, Hansel, wilt thou?"

I replied solemnly: "I swear it!"

"Good! then I will let thee keep thy moustache."

So now, my friend, I have sworn by my beard. When all was finished I opened the casement window into the room, so that the black wall was behind it. This is our mirror here. Alfred, I was terrified. It is beyond all description! I should never have believed that under this beautiful beard such an ugly fellow could have been hidden. My youthful face of long ago,—thou must remember it,—that was passable. But now——

Alas for me! I thought, when she sees me as I now am! It is even worse than the rabbit whose lip was cloven for laughing God in the face. I

folded my hands: "Father, thou hast annihilated me!" I must have said it in a very melancholy voice, for my housefather was horrified at what he had done.

Rocherl laughed aloud. "Ha!" cried his mother, "if thou canst laugh at people like that, my lad, thy hand must have stopped hurting thee! Every man is just as God made him."

"Only wait with thy sneering till I have finished," said the housefather. "The wilderness is exterminated, now the ground must be made smooth. Then he will be handsome, our Hansel!"

And so I was again taken in hand. With common soft-soap he lathered my face, and while it was drying he sharpened his razor on his leathern trousers; then with a terrific and savage determination he set to work somewhat as an executioner performs his duty for the first time. It seemed as if I must cry aloud my innocence, so that the whole world might hear—and already I felt the deadly steel. When the stubble-field was at last smooth, it appeared that the ends of my moustache were uneven; on one side was left a little tuft, on the other, nothing at all. So away with the whole business! And then the slave's toilet was complete.

I am now bound by a new chain to the honourable ranks of the peasantry, for a return to the city with this visage is unthinkable. I do not trust him, my Adam! He may have had the most devilish sort of intentions.

"Now he looks like the priest!" said Rocherl. This was too much! What if with my hair and beard gone, my mask had fallen and I had stood revealed as my true self before all eyes!

Next I must tell thee about the incident of this morning. On Sundays there is no rapping on my wall, but instead my housefather himself came into my room to-day.

"Thou art quite right," he said, "to take thine ease in bed. It is our Lord's day of rest. But later—I must say it to thee sometime—later, thou shouldst go to church. I am responsible for my people that they cling to the Christian faith. We live in the world together and would also live together in heaven. Is it not so, Hansel?"

This made me angry. Teach me in religious matters! It is a direct insult to a cavalier. But at the same time I was pleased, although I had always conceived of heaven as something different from sitting together with the Adamshaus people. Indeed, I think that the father spoke in the name of his whole family, including the younger female portion. But this is an aside, not yet passed by the censor.

This morning I was neither lying in bed nor had I risen, but was in a sitting posture. And Adam said in surprise: "What are those papers?" He had spied several numbers of *The Continental Post* under my pillow. "See here, Hansel, that cannot be very comfortable to lie on. They are n't newspapers, I hope?"

"Oh, of course not, of course not!" I replied,

throwing the bed-spread, as if by accident, over the papers.

The peasant, however, leaned over and— Now my candle is going out.

Tenth Sunday.

Dear Friend:

Did I tell thee last Sunday how the old man caught me with my newspaper? It was outrageous.

"So it is true," he said, drawing the papers out from under my pillow. "Now I know what ails thee. For a long time I have felt that there was something wrong with thee. Now I can understand why there is no room in thy brain for common sense, if it is filled with such stuff. That must not be, Hansel. Besides this I have no complaint against thee; thou art accommodating, willing, and contented, although things are not exactly cheerful with us nowadays. Just wait till summer! Then thou wilt be happier; then we are gay up here on the Alm."

"Yes, yes," I said; "I am already looking forward to the time when we shall all yodel together, and work industriously too, of course."

This was meant to divert him from the subject; however, he continued: "But if thou spendest thy time over newspapers! We have no use for a farm-hand who reads the papers. Be thankful that the dear God has placed thee in an honourable station in life that has nothing to do with such tomfoolery. If thou wouldst read something, thou wilt find in

the house *The Life of Christ*, *The Legends of the Saints*, and the prayer-book."

And the farmhand from distant parts replied quite modestly: "Might I ask, father, why thou art so opposed to the newspapers?"

Adam then slowly drew himself erect until his hat was pressed flat against the wooden ceiling. Other people shout when they are angry; my housefather speaks more softly than usual.

"Dost thou not know, Hansel? Hast thou never heard that the newspaper writers are heathen? Or even Jews?"

"Yes, indeed, father, I have already heard that."

"And also that newspapers are poison for peasants? Here is an example right at hand: Nansen, in Hoisendorf. He does nothing but read the papers. To be sure, he always knew more than the rest of us. He knew what was going on in Prussia, and in France, and how the members of the *Reichstag* quarrelled with each other, and all such things. But how to work his farm he never did know. Every new machine which was advertised in the papers, he felt that he must have at once. And he bought them with precious money. He even bought a machine to sow grain, just as if he had no hands of his own to do it with! But when he went to sow the grain he had no seed! Last of all he bought—Nansen bought—" He began to laugh.

"What, then, father?"

"Ha, ha! Thou must not take me for a gossip, Hans, but, then, anyone else would tell thee the

same story. He bought fertiliser! The peasant Nansen, with his stalls full of cattle, bought artificial fertiliser and paid cash for it!"

As I did not stir, my Adam came up close to the bed and, folding his hands, said: "Think of it, Hansel,—a farmer paying cash for fertiliser!"

"*O mein Gott!*" I replied, "why should he not buy fertiliser? Fertiliser is a necessity for a farmer."

To this remark the housefather made no reply; he only murmured to himself: "Nans is done for. If thou wouldst like to buy his farm, it is to be sold at auction."

Afterwards, at breakfast, the subject came up again, and the housemother said: "Why dost thou act so strangely with Hansel to-day, father? One would think that he had only last night fallen from the sky! He is pretending something." Then turning to me: "'T is true, Hansel, thou art very likable, but I don't quite trust thee. Thou hast something mysterious about thee, that thou art trying to keep from people. Never mind, Hansel, I don't believe it is anything bad, and I won't ask thee about it. As long as we see nothing worse than this in thee, we will stay together. I don't know whether we need thee more, or thou us."

And so it stands. She is a devil of a fellow, this woman!

Whether they are right in their opinions is a question. All the same they have the opinions, and they are firmly fixed, and I am glad of it. They have two hands and a brain. At the curiosity ex-

pressed by the housemother I merely shrugged my shoulders—that was the best thing to do, was it not? But I have been obliged to deceive the housefather. I told him that he should find no more newspapers in my possession. This sufficed for the honest, straightforward man. My wits must see to it that the papers are hidden more effectually, and that henceforth the Hoisendorf teacher delivers them to me secretly. I am deceiving the old man, friend, with a promise.

As for giving up the papers, I could not do that, for the very reason that my abhorrence of the world must last forty-two weeks longer. Just one day without news from the wide world and I am at once hoaxed into believing it the most desirable place possible. I have stopped corresponding with my colleagues of *The Continental.* Their paltry jokes have ceased to appeal to me, now that I am living in the midst of poverty and am witnessing the cruel misery of this existence. But from the newspaper I am able to learn how clever we once were, and how week by week I am removing myself farther from its atmosphere. I must be careful, however; the greater the distance between ourselves and the press, so much the more is one inclined to believe it, although it may have an utter disregard for truth itself. One must read between the lines to learn the real truth. The worse the condition of things out in the world, so much the better for me. Listen, friend, to what I say: I hate thy world. But it is a hatred born of love. It is the hatred of love, Alfred.

We will leave this now and become again the obedient farmhand who is about to throw the old newspapers into the fire. But the housemother interferes: "Don't do that, Hansel; it will make a stench!"

And then I departed for the church in Hoisendorf. I seated myself in the Adamshaus pew. It seems that every farm has its own pew in church, for which the parish collects a yearly rental of nine *Kreuzer*. It is no easy-chair, I assure thee. We are verily sandwiched between the back and the partition in front, sitting upon a board five inches broad, with a kneeling-bench before us.

The church is in mourning now, the altars are draped in dark blue cloth, for it is Lent. There was no suggestion of the carnival at Adamshaus; Adam merely killed a pig, at which task I helped him. When we were removing the bristles from the dead animal, with a concoction of lye, Adam asked me:

"Dost thou know, Hansel, why the pig has a curly tail? No? Well, then, tell him, Rocherl."

And Rocherl related the following: "When the Jews were in Egypt the swineherd of King Pharaoh tried to throw little pigs across the Nile to sell them secretly. But the Nile is broad and the pigs all fell into the water. Then the devil appeared and said, 'Swineherd, that will not work! See, thou shouldst first make a loop in the pig's tail as a handle to catch hold of. So!' And seizing a pig, the devil made a loop in its tail and threw it across the river.

But Moses said to the Jews: 'No, my beloved people, meat thrown to us by the devil, we may not eat!'"

"And thus it came about," added Adam, "that pigs have curly tails and that Jews eat no pork."

"That 's only a piece of nonsense," said the housemother, who cannot endure to have anyone make light of sacred subjects. However, in carnival time she seemed to be somewhat less particular, for then, even among the peasants, there is more or less jesting. In former years there were masquerades and all kinds of old-fashioned dances, but this year the only festivity in Hoisendorf was a so-called wood-cutters' and soldiers' ball, where there was little dancing and much fighting. Ah, thou thinkest perhaps they fought for God and for the fatherland, or even for women! No, my dear friend. Among the wood-cutters, hunters, peasants, and miners assembled there, as the schoolmaster tells me, a difference of opinion arose and they wrote leading articles on the social question with beechwood sticks and legs of chairs upon each other's backs. This manner of writing political newspaper articles will soon be fashionable among you outside also.

Well, that is one way of fighting! On the following Wednesday the priest of Hoisendorf wrote quite a different sort of message on the foreheads of his parishioners, with charred beechwood sticks: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return!" Art thou not acquainted with this custom of the Church?

Adamshaus stands only three hundred metres above the Hoisendorf inn; but up here all is peaceful and quiet. We can depend upon our energetic housemother for a strict régime and she makes the most of her authority. Even Adam enjoys her despotism.

In thy last letter thou didst inquire anxiously about the dishes from which the food is served in Adamshaus, and about other things pertaining to the same subject. I cannot tell thee anything especial about it. The wooden bowls and spoons, however, are all moonshine. Also the horn spoons and forks, although my housefather has saved a few of these from his ancestors. These horn spoons seem intended for very large mouthfuls, so are entirely inappropriate for a journalist, but they are very clean and beautiful to look upon, with their transparent colouring, resembling mother-of-pearl. An old cotter in Gai, who formerly manufactured these spoons from the horns of cattle, is to-day a beggar, and he is thankful if he can get a bit of soup from his adversaries, the tin spoons.

The peasant women cook in tin saucepans and earthenware kettles. Their secret desire is to possess an iron soup-kettle, but such a luxury is beyond their means. When I get my twenty thousand *Kronen*, then, housemother, shall thine extravagant desire be fulfilled!

A few times a year, with a basket on her back, she goes to Kailing to the potter and the tinsmith to buy pots, bowls, milk-pans, and other household

utensils. Whenever anything is broken in the house, there follows a critical day of the first order, and the more indifferent the criminal so much the more violent is the indignation of the housemother. Thus we have come to bewail each broken pitcher as a great misfortune, hoping thereby to mitigate her wrath.

Her frenzy for cleaning is a veritable nuisance sometimes. Evenings, after the rest of us have gone to bed, she works for hours, washing, scrubbing, and on Saturdays her rage for scouring lasts all day, making it impossible to sit down in the house for a moment. Tables, benches, chests, stools, pans, all flooded; only the knives, forks, and spoons, which hang on the wall, are never washed, for these each one of us wipes off on the table-cloth every time we use them, and that suffices. Shirts and bed linen, when it is their turn, are baked and boiled and beaten thoroughly with wooden boards. If thou shouldst fail to comprehend the inner meaning of this process, thou must not complain.

You outsiders have the Greco-Turkish war to nibble with your morning coffee. The burning question of the Hoisendorfers is the coming election for the *Landtag*. And even my Adam has brought home with him a bit of political diplomacy to-day. It probably caught on his clothing by accident and was left hanging there. As he was removing his Loden-cloth coat, after coming in from church, he murmured to himself: "That was a curious thing for our priest to do. He came up to me before confession and told me that I must not vote for any

revolutionist or knave, and I don't know what else he said, but it was something about Social Democrats. Canst thou explain, Hansel, what he meant by it?"

How little he suspects! An editorial, which for a long time I have been repressing with the greatest effort, rose to my lips: The Social Democrats! Equality! Abolition of caste; common ownership of the land; woman's rights! The party is not stupid, that is only the accusation made against it by its adversaries. It merely desires equal rights, and that a man should have what he earns. That is simple enough. We must give the under man a chance to rise. He is of our blood. How many peasants have brothers and sons in the factories! They may be rough, but they possess strength, soundness of heart, and courage. They are the sons of the soil and have within them all the possibilities of a glorious harvest. Their virility is not yet exhausted, and it is they who must put an end to puppyism!

I wonder if I really said all this. I only know that the family stood there, gazing at one another in great perplexity. And in my excitement I added: "Vote for a Social Democrat, Adam! They are not half as bad as they seem."

At last the peasant recovered himself and said: "So, so." And he knew no more about the subject than before. "That may be, that may be," he continued; "I don't understand it. I think we 'll vote for a peasant."

Ah, well, we make a nice pair, the priest and I. One of us would have the voter do this, the other, that, and we pull him hither and thither like angels and devils struggling for the possession of a poor soul. Only we do not know which of us is the angel. And this is called liberty at the polls! Why a person about to vote should not be allowed to choose for himself, is one of those Chinese puzzles with which our western country is better supplied than the Chinese Empire itself. "Moo!" says my neighbour, the ox. And I am also of the same opinion.

Eleventh Sunday.

Well, there is no help for it, my dear friend! Here it is the middle of March and not a sign of spring yet, and I have been obliged to bring my writing materials back into the stable with my oxen. There are five of them now, and the heat emanating from their huge bodies keeps both them and myself warm. So thou must excuse me if my letter does not remind thee constantly of *Eau de Cologne*.

One day this last week Rocherl and I were sitting together in the house picking wool. For thine instruction: The wool, which the previous autumn has been shorn from the sheep, then thoroughly soaked in lye, is now in matted hanks and must be loosened and disentangled. Then it comes under the cards and finally to the spinning-wheel. The road from the sheep to the loom is at least as long as that of the rag to the bank-note paper, and the road from the loom to the tailor is often no

shorter. Without the proper knowledge, industry, and skill, this road is just as difficult as that of the tradesman or manufacturer. Oh, yes, any child can pick wool! But I, who was supposed to have grown to manhood before I was forced in such a strange way to renew my childhood, was obliged to learn how to do it. At first I thought I had merely to divide the strands and I started to tear them apart.

"Thou art clever, I must say!" said Rocherl, pulling at one of my wonderful skeins. Even Rocherl has some difficulty with it, for one really needs two hands, and one of his is useless. As I glanced at the handsome lad and noticed how pale and dejected he sat there—a cripple for life—I asked him how the misfortune had come about.

He opened wide his large, lustrous eyes, which often gleam with a strange light, and answered in a dreamy, sing-song tone: "A deer was to blame for it." Then recovering himself, he laughed. "A deer! Did I say a deer? Just see, Hansel, how bad a man can be. How can the deer help it if I want to shoot!"

Then I remarked: "It is probably the old story. The peasant must protect his grain and vegetables against the creatures of the forest. And when the poor man is trying to defend his possessions the cursed hunter lets the deer go and shoots at the peasant."

"No, Hansel, that was n't it this time," answered Rocherl.—"See here, thou must separate the grey

strands from the white, otherwise the cloth will be spotted.—It happened in quite a different way. In midwinter the deer do not eat grain and vegetables. I just wanted to shoot, and when I once want a thing, I can think of nothing else—until I get it."

"I will pick the wool very carefully, Rocherl, if thou wilt tell me the story."

"When thou findest knots, thou must not leave them in; they must be thrown out.—Well, I was always going up behind the grove with my gun. I often stood there half the night. But it never amounted to anything. The first time, just as I was about to shoot, the percussion cap would not go off. The second time, as I was aiming at a deer, a gun was fired, Hansel, but not mine. I got the hunter's bullet here in my hand, and it is in there still. I saw nothing more, heard nothing. I tell thee, when a man is shot, he can't even say to himself, 'Now I am shot,' it is all so quick."

"But thou wast not killed, that is evident."

"When I came to myself, I was lying in bed, and the priest was standing over me and something was being said about my dying. 'I don't care!' I thought to myself, and then I fell asleep. But, Hansel, the bullet would not let me sleep long."

"Did it pain thee?"

"The devil, of course it did!"

"Now, tell me, who shot thee?"

"That damned rascal, Konrad, the hunter."

"But if it served thee right?"

"Served me right? Oh, yes. Because I poached

and because poaching is forbidden. Still, the hunter had no business to shoot at a man. He might have taken my gun away from me—that he could have done. If I had defended myself, then he might have shot. But not so! Not so! I call it murder, because he had been an enemy of mine. And he knows it very well. I might have sued him for it; the peasant, Kulmbock, told me so. But what good would it do me if he went to jail? My hand is not to be bought with such a price. I will sell it dearer than that, Hansel!"

Thou shouldst have seen him at this moment; there was something weird about him. I tried to calm him.

"The hunter was frightened at what he had done," continued Rocherl. "He came the same day to the house to ask after me. He had only intended to discharge his gun, he said, and had not meant to hit me. 'I am no longer angry with thee,' I said to him. 'Perhaps I 'll get even with thee sometime, perhaps not.'"

"If I were in thy place, I should be more anxious about my hand than I should be about the hunter."

"Oh, that will heal again; the pitch will draw the bullet out."

How sorry I am for the lad, just budding into manhood. He will have a hard struggle in this cruel world for a bare existence. He is useless now for work or for shooting, and he looks so confidently into his shadowy future. As to his forgiving the hunter, "perhaps he will get even with him, perhaps

not." When the priest advised him to grant his pardon, Rocherl answered: "I cannot very well do anything else, for the hunter is stronger than I."

"Rocherl," I said, "I do not wish to make thee uneasy. Thy hand will heal, but cobbler's wax is not a corkscrew. This is work for a doctor."

He replied: "We asked Marenzel, the old woman who makes salves, and she told us to be sure and not have a doctor, for he would cut off the whole hand at once. I would rather have a hand with a hole in it than to have no hand at all. And she said that the bullet would come out after a while. The full moon must shine upon it three times."

Now I know why three weeks ago the lad remained standing outside of the door, his poor hand stretched towards the rising moon.

After we had picked wool together a while in silence, Rocherl remarked: "It is probably better for me as it is. The poaching is of no account. And I could never have controlled myself. Thou couldst not understand, Hansel, what it means, to be drawn out of bed at night, like a calf dragged by a rope, straight to the woods. If I heard a crackling sound in the thicket, or saw something running, how quickly I felt a quiver in my hand, and if I had nothing with me but a pitchfork, I would instinctively place that against my cheek."

"And thou hast no pity for the poor creatures? They are just as anxious to live as thou. Dost thou never think of that?"

"Does the hunter think of it, the scoundrel? How stupid thou art—there 's no time to think, or the deer will run away. And then, if I don't shoot it, the hunter will."

"Listen to me, Rocherl. Every thief could make that excuse."

"Thou art right. But it is as if one were bewitched. There is nothing so fascinating in the whole world as shooting deer."

The last words he repeated in a sing-song tone and we both of us thought at once of the folk-song:

> The winds may blow, the thunder roll,
> Or the sun shine bright and clear,
> For me exists no greater joy
> Than hunting down the deer!

And this same lad is so anxious about the domestic animals; he prepares their feed with the greatest care and he never forgets after each meal to scatter crumbs on the window-sill outside, that the sparrows may satisfy their hunger during the long, cold winter.

He has no work to do in the cow-stalls, for Barbel has charge there, and no one need to worry about anything under her care. Nothing can go wrong where Barbel is.

A few days ago we had a severe thunder-storm, with much lightning and hail, as if it were midsummer. They say such a thing has never happened before at this season. It came in the night.

I was called into the house to help pray away the storm by the dim light of a consecrated taper, or to be on hand to assist in case the lightning should strike the house. The rolling and crashing of the thunder were weird and awful. "Hail on the snow brings no harm to the grain!" said the housefather; still, they were terrified. Rocherl crouched in his night-shirt before the hearth. He trembled and groaned, and covering both eyes and ears with his hands, cried for his sister. She was awakened and as soon as she entered the room he became calm. She spoke no word of comfort, she did not pray nor did she even seem surprised; she gazed absently into space, as has become her wont of late. The storm abated; outside all was quiet in the snow-lit night, and it almost seemed as if the girl had subdued the elements.

Am I writing about her again?—She is nothing but a simple little maid after all.

Thy devoted slave.

P. S.—Thou askest what the conversational style which I have adopted in my letters might be called. I pray thee to be merciful in passing thy æsthetic judgment—it is the "flail style." When one's limbs are stiff and weary and one's heart is full, one does not choose the flowery, winding paths through the rose garden of the German language. One must plunge straight ahead through briars and underbrush. Had Goethe been a farmhand instead of Minister of State, his style might also have become

a flail style or a pitchfork style. And soon I shall probably adopt the dung-fork also.

Twelfth Sunday.

An emotional man would write about tactfulness and nobility of character. I simply say: Good-hearted people. With the exception of the house-mother, who is sometimes rather sharp, all the members of this household are gentle and considerate towards each other. When the father has an attack of asthma, they do their utmost to relieve him; still, a few grains of witches'-weed are worth more than all their love. But, alas! if Marenzel fails to appear with the herb! The old woman had intimated that she was offended and so she had stayed away, while we all of us racked our brains to discover what could have offended her. The house-mother remembered having set Marenzel's cup of roasted-meal coffee on the bench before her instead of on the table, which was covered with skeins of flax. Or had Franzel perhaps insulted her dachshund? For he had called it "dog." During a shower the housefather had jestingly quoted in her presence the proverb: "When it rains in the sunshine, the devil is whipping his wife with a shoulder of mutton." Could Marenzel have misinterpreted this? For she is said to be one who takes everything disagreeable as meant for herself. Well, she did not come, and there was no witches'-weed in the house and the poor man nearly choked to death. Finally Rocherl was sent out to look for her. He found her begging in the valley with her little red

dachshund, that she always carries with her in a basket.

"Dearest Marenzel," he said, "we are making butter at home to-day, and perhaps thou wouldst like to come and taste of it. Mother said that the butter was especially sweet this time and she wished Marenzel were there to try it."

"Very well," answered the old woman, "I will not be a stone if people are good to me." And she came stumbling up the mountain with Rocherl. She removed her broad-brimmed felt hat, turning her little round and almost bald head in all directions to see if perchance some enemy might be present. Then, taking off her darned and padded jacket, she asked sharply where she might be allowed to sit down.

"Wherever thou wilt, wherever thou wilt, Marenzel," answered the housemother. "We are in great trouble. The father has such a pressure on his chest again."

"Indeed! It must be the spring weather. He should take care. The peasant plants in the fall and the bone-man in the spring." And she did not mention the herb.

When she had arranged a bed for her dog in the basket and had petted him with caressing words, when she had given him milk and butter and had herself devoured with greedy appetite the bread and butter offered her, afterwards wiping her hard fingers on a rag, the housemother finally approached her and begged for the herb.

Then the old woman craned her neck forward. Her glaring eyes stood out of her head, her hand resting upon her cane began to tremble.

"Oh ho, Mistress Adam! So it 's not us poor folks and having us try thy butter, it 's the witches'-weed thou art after! My dear woman, thy son should have said that sooner. I have no weed with me."

As I happened to be present, the thought occurred to me: Wait, old woman, we will crush thy beggar's pride out of thee yet! "Housemother," said I, without apparently noticing old Marenzel, "if the father has another attack of short breathing, I know of a remedy which will certainly cure it,—dog's fat from a red dachshund. There is nothing better for lung disease. And we shall not need the ill-smelling witches'-weed."

If it were worth the trouble, I should like to preserve in alcohol the look of hatred the old woman gave me. Nevertheless she produced the herb, enough to smoke to death all the witches and quack doctors in Almgai; also fresh cobbler's wax for the bullet-wound, saying: "If the waning moon has not already shone too much upon it, it will surely draw out the lead."

After she had gone and the housefather had been relieved by the smoke, I received reproaches. He did not wish to hear the sacred herb jeered at in his house. One should rather thank the dear God for letting it grow. And what did all that about the dachshund mean? We should not begrudge the

poor old thing her little dog. That was a virtue of hers, that she had an affection for animals.

Then, "the waning moon." It is Rocherl's bullet-wound that makes the hearts of the entire family bleed. Their other sorrow is their soldier boy, Valentin, out in the wide world. For weeks they have been expecting him home on leave. At Christmas he sent his photograph; Rocherl hung it with the other pictures over the shrine, but the father took it down.

"As it is, we think too much of the boy when we pray; and all the more when his picture hangs before our eyes! Even though soldiers are sometimes tortured, still he is no martyr that we should place him among the saints."

The pride of the house is little Franzel. The schoolmaster expects great things from the boy. There is even some talk of sending him next year to the seminary. If thou wilt consider a moment, whence come the champions of the Church and the zealous priests, who are as important factors in the world's history as other powers—most of them come from peasant homes. They are filled with the unused forces of the soil. But the old couple in Adamshaus do not think of this. Their highest earthly ambition is to attend a mass celebrated by their son, when their own hair has grown white.

The apple of their eye, their hearts' treasure and their trembling joy is——. No one says this, but everyone sees it. When Barbel is not in sight—where is she then? When she is carrying straw

into the stall or stacking wood before the house—is it not too hard for her? When she lays her spoon aside at table—"What is the matter with thee, child, that thou dost not eat? Art thou warm enough at night, Barbel? And hast thou no pain, Barbel?"

On St. Joseph's Day, while the girl was in church, I overheard a conversation between Adam and his wife which gave me food for thought. She said to him:

"I don't know why it is, Adam, but I feel so depressed."

"Why then, mother?"

"I don't know myself."

With a mischievous smile he retorted: "If something troubles thee, old woman, I cannot help thee. Formerly thou hast helped thyself."

"Thou meanest that I should pray a paternoster for the poor souls in purgatory?"

He shook his head—that was not it.

"Or look after the work more carefully?" said she.

"Mother, thou dost not scold enough! Thou must learn to speak out and then thou wilt feel better."

"Stop thy joking, old man, I am not in the mood for it now. It is hard enough to have thee so indifferent. Hast thou noticed nothing, Adam? How sad she always is?"

"Who?"

"And how she never laughs? Barbel?"

"Barbel? Not laugh? Never gay?—Yes, wife,

I, too, have noticed it. And have we not always called her the silver-tongued bell of the house?"

"True. But we can do so no more. It is long since she was that. Now, canst thou remember a time when she has laughed?"

"Since that day when she fell into the water she has seemed quite different to me," answered Adam.

"When she fell into the brook at Hoisendorf?"

"Yes, she is changed since then."

"But I see no reason for that. Oh, what if something ailed the child! Heavenly Mother Mary, what if something ailed the child!"

"Then it must be the hand which troubles her," said Adam.

"The hand? She has nothing the matter with her hand."

"Rocherl's hand?"

"*Mein Gott*, perhaps it is that!"

"She must see, though, that the lad himself is cheerful now."

"But he is not in earnest, my dear! His trouble reaches deeper than he lets it appear. Oh, he cannot deceive his mother! How gladly would we bear our children's burdens! How gladly! To think that such a trial should come to our Rocherl!"

"*Mein Gott*, Traudel," he replied, "we are living in the world where misfortune is nothing new. Do we then expect to have our heaven here in Almgai? Thou foolish child, then dying would be all the harder afterwards."

Thus they conversed together during the morning

by the fireside. At noon, when the others returned from Hoisendorf, they brought a letter from the soldier boy. The housemother had made some doughnuts fried in linseed oil for our dinner, but as delicious as they usually tasted, we had no appetite for them. Valentin is ill in the hospital at Laibach in Kraimerland. What his illness is, he does not write, but he is always thinking of home, always of home! The first one to shed tears was Franzel; Rocherl merely beat his breast; the mother crouched in the corner by the fire, motionless and silent. The father's eyes grew so large that only the pupils were visible. Barbel stood perfectly quiet by the window, looking out with her great, melancholy eyes, her hands folded before her.

Now, farmhand from distant parts, make thyself useful! So I began to comfort them. "Hospital! What of that? I had been in the military hospital twice, once for four weeks, once for six. A man lacks for nothing there but a little health. He has a warm bed, a bit of meat, and a doctor. And he is taken care of like a count. He is required neither to stand sentinel, nor to exercise; he is not cursed at, is not punished, and the time passes after a fashion. Sometimes they are very jolly in the hospitals; they gossip, play cards, smoke,—the finest tobacco, of course,—tell stories, and make all kinds of jokes until they are bent double with laughter. I will also add that many men are not at all pleased when they have recovered and must leave."

I believe, philosopher, that I have this time really

earned my soup, together with the salt and caraway. The faces of all brightened like a clear sky after a rain.

"I, too, think that it cannot be so bad," said the housefather, whose shoulders bear the heaviest burdens lightly. If only the housemother were like him! But no, she would not be deprived of the conviction that poor Valentin was suffering the bitterest want. It was an old custom, she said, to starve the soldiers.

"If he is hungry on his sickbed," said the housefather, "if he has a good appetite, then he will come back to us again."

"Did n't he ask for any money?" asked the mother. Rocherl, who had read the letter, obeying a sign from his father, had refrained from reading the line at the very bottom of the page.

"He has not even asked for money!" cried the mother.

The omitted line read as follows: "Might I have just two *Gulden*, dear parents?" The father wished first to consult the children about the money before disclosing the request to his wife. A few days ago the tax collector was here, already for the third time in six weeks. The document makes a complicated reference to back taxes which Adam thought he had paid long ago. But there was no help for it; the collector carried off with him the remainder of Adam's savings, with the threat that he should not come again, and if the last quota were not paid by Easter, he would take a pair of oxen. Oh, what happiness to live in a civilised country!

The assiduous visits of this official had brought on Adam an attack of asthma. As the tax collector had affected his lungs, so now the soldier's letter went to his heart. But all at once I noticed Barbel's face light up with pleasure.

"Does Valentin want some money?" she asked cheerily.

"Oh, of course, a soldier can never have too much money," answered the father.

A few moments later she brought a dainty little gaily embroidered portfolio from her room. "Now he can come home at once, if he will," she said, taking out eight or ten smoothly folded *Gulden.*

The mother started in great excitement: "Barbel, where didst thou get the money?"

"Nonsense," laughed the father, "where should she get it? Thou wilt give away thy christening money, child?"

But it was not the money which he thought.

"Hast thou already forgotten Cousin Hetsche?" asked Barbel. O friend, how beautiful her Madonna face is when she smiles mischievously!

"The money from thy cousin?"

"That which she bequeathed to me. Thou knowest about it, mother."

"Thou shouldst have put it into the savings-bank in Kailing! Thou didst not put it in? Oh, thou careless child!"

"Why should the bank at Kailing have it when I can keep it just as well at home?"

As she took the last note from the portfolio, I

glanced at the money and started back in amazement. They were all paper *Gulden*, which had been out of circulation for the last two years. And this is the money that they were about to send to Valentin! Then I thought to myself: Oh, Adam, Adam! A newspaper, even in the peasant's house, would not be amiss sometimes!

Now I am going to ask thee something, Alfred.

Thou hast proved thyself a brave man by remaining so loyal to the farmhand from distant parts. But with thy hand on thy heart, wouldst thou have had the courage to explain to this girl, that her savings, so carefully hoarded in the pretty portfolio and which she was about to send to the sick Valentin to enable him to return home, were nothing but worthless paper? That would have been precisely as if some rascally robber had snatched her property out of her hands. Well, I moved the bench on which I was sitting a little nearer the table.

"Look here, Barbel," I said, "let me see them. Thou hast eight *Gulden*, paper money. Dost thou not know that paper will not be accepted at the post-office? Nowadays money can only be sent by a post-office order, and silver must be paid for it. Yes, yes, my lass, thou wouldst not believe how capricious our imperial post has grown. However, that is easily remedied. Wait a moment, and I will change the paper for silver. I have a whole heap of them in my pocket, and they bother me. I prefer the paper and the post-office prefers the silver, so we are both suited."

I lied, but I hope that the dear God, provided that He troubles Himself about a good-for-nothing fellow like myself, will pardon me for three hundred newspaper lies for the sake of this one. Thou saidst once that goodness in people was contagious. I have nothing to say against the assertion.

And so the three-legged courier in Hoisendorf was given the commission to send the money, together with an affectionate letter saying that the home still stood as firmly fixed as a rock, that parents, brothers, and sister were well and happy, and that every day they prayed a paternoster for the safe return of their Valentin. Nothing was said about the wounded hand. That has no interest for him at present.

When the letter was written and read aloud, Barbel looked at me. Had I written it from her own heart? Man, no one has ever looked at me as affectionately as that! To-day is the beginning of spring. How well it accords with my feelings, Professor! The beginning of spring! The beginning of spring!

ADAMSHAUS, Thirteenth Sunday.

To my colleagues of *The Continental Post:*

Let us have done with this, gentlemen! Your brilliant witticisms, which properly belong in your paper, but which instead you have been writing to me, who have no claim upon them, are no longer appropriate. I am already too much of a peasant justly to appreciate their worth. The philistine has

now become so strong in me that I have stopped "knowing" and am beginning to "doubt," and to suspect the meaning of the well-known words: "By the sweat of thy brow." And I am also learning what human life is like.

The Continental is no longer an absolute necessity to me, but if you wish to continue sending it, to remind me of your friendly interest, then address it to *Herrn Guido Winter, Schoolmaster in Hoisendorf, above Kailing.* Such papers are not allowed at my home, because, according to a remark of the person in authority, they cause an ill-smelling odour when burning.

Here the odour of fresh earth is beginning to rise from the ground, and after the smell of incense, powder, and printer's ink with which my nostrils are already full, this is quite ideal.

Do not worry about me. When the year is up I will present my visiting-card at your door. The end.

HANS TRAUTENDORFFER.

Fourteenth Sunday.

Dearest Alfred:

Last Sunday I had only time to write a final letter to the gentlemen of *The Continental Post.* Their communications have been growing exceedingly disagreeable to me. Thy letters always encourage and help me, but theirs, with their frivolous jokes, have depressed me. And I had just received another.

The greater part of last Sunday I spent poring over an old book which I discovered in a worm-eaten chest. It is a history of the world, written from the standpoint of an aged scholar. Not worth reading, except that I believe to have discovered in it some of my ancestors. And this has given food to my imagination. At the time of the Hohenstauffen, the Trautendorffers played quite an important rôle. One "Hannus Trautentorffer" was drawn and quartered in Augsburg. The man seems to have been somewhat too strict in imposing transit duties on the rich merchants who sailed through the Spessart.

Our Rocherl is fond of reading, so I have blotted out my name in this book with an ink-spot. If Adam, whose ancestors have probably tilled the soil for centuries, only knew that I had occasion to purify mine with ink!

I wonder if my old, bear-eating forefathers ever so much as dreamed that a time would come when one of their descendants would be reduced to eating thin pea-soup! I never before really understood the meaning of Lent. Nor have I ever before noticed whether the calendar always makes it last seven weeks. Now we are in the midst of it. However, the week of dieting on pea-soup is over and we are being fed on water-soup; morning, noon, and night, nothing but water-soup. It is sometimes enriched with a bit of butter, but on Fridays it is always pure, with the exception of a flavouring of onions, the chief condiment of Lent. Oh, if the

good Adam could only peep into the kitchen of a prelate during Lent!

Barbel understands tailoring and she has already been obliged to take in my coat and vest. Still, I notice no diminution of my bodily health and strength. Temperance, good air, physical exercise —even in the cities these are recommended. Oh, yes, these are taught, but how often are they put into practice! The callous spots on my hands have long since ceased to pain me. My housefather, looking at my city shoes, which are still thick and good, said one day: "Why dost thou not black them again? They deserve it. I should think, though, that thy toes would freeze together in them." To-day I am wearing a pair of Valentin's, the superfluous room being filled out with straw. I am also supplied with other garments by my employers. My travelling suit must be saved if I am to appear in it before thee on some future occasion-- These dashes stand for interrogation points.

A few days ago, my dear philosopher, I was fully initiated into the ranks of the peasantry. After performing various tasks and duties I have at length been promoted to the dunghill. We are carrying the manure on sledges from the stable to the fields. In the country the snow is no impediment to transportation, as city people seem to think; on the contrary, it takes the place of the railroad, and wherever the farmer goes with his sledge, the smooth, shining tracks are laid.

At first I felt a great horror of the above-named

task. There was nothing which I dreaded more than touching the dunghill, that lay so harmlessly in the yard. No one else seemed to mind it, and the men who worked over it came from the spring into the house with clean hands. When I plunged my fork into the pile for the first time, my feelings must have been similar to those of a soldier firing his first shot, something which never happened during my military service. The Baroness von Süttner[1] is no doubt responsible for the fact that there are no more respectable wars nowadays. Such a state of affairs is a veritable calamity for the newspapers. My housemother, it is true, prays every night before going to sleep a prayer full of anguish for peace. Whoever has a beloved child in the army feels differently about this matter from the subscriber to a newspaper. If it be a question of defending the fatherland, the peasant marches away with great enthusiasm. But for political power, for the acquisition of Turkish provinces, or for a million soldiers, who proclaim peace with the barrels of their guns, the peasant has not a *Groschen's* worth of understanding.

And now back to my gold mine. No one can deny that the odour from it is strong, one might almost say pungent. But there are worse smelling so-called perfumes in the cities. Canst thou guess of what it reminded me as I plunged in my fork? Of the fine, old cheese which is served after dinner.

[1] Baroness Bertha von Süttner, author of the celebrated novel *Die Waffen Nieder.*

It is a pity, though, that in this case it is dessert without the preceding meal. My housefather smiled with satisfaction. The steaming piles were oozing with richness and were here and there sprinkled with saltpetre. If the weather is only favourable, the grain will sprout. Up to the present the grey fields are merely dotted with the little black heaps of compost, but Barbel is coming with her fork to scatter them over the soil. Poets of the olden school would sing: "She is sowing roses!" I, the rustic peasant, say she is sowing the fruits of the earth. We shall see next August. Apropos of the subject, I must tell thee a story of something which has taken place in Kailing. The priest, the schoolmaster, and others in Hoisendorf know about it. There has been much talk and jesting over it, but more cursing. Well, here it is:

THE WONDERFUL STORY OF THE DISREPUTABLE GARIBAL.

It happened in Kailing on the Rechen. The people were standing in their doorways, whispering the news into each other's ears. The baker was crying it aloud in the kitchens: "Do you know it already?" and in the alleys: "It must be true, for the people are talking of it everywhere."

Of what? Ah, if one only knew! But at all events it is incredible. The man has heretofore made a good impression, and he has an excellent character; he is a son of the rich Grösselhofer. He

has passed his doctorate and even risen to the rank of first lieutenant, yet he is not a bit proud, but is still friendly with all his schoolmates in Kailing. A short time ago he was seen at home at Grösselhof, helping with the work like a farmhand. He enjoys having his fun with the girls, too, and singing gay songs. He is a dapper, handsome fellow!

And now such a rumour! Such a horrid rumour! It is said even to be reported in the paper. And in very deed, the weekly paper contained the notice that a disciplinary investigation was to be made in regard to the reserve-lieutenant, Garibal Randener. But for what? For what? The people were whispering and surmising. One man knew something about a theft, and he would have received a thrashing for spreading such a report had he not hastily explained that his story was indeed not without foundation, for the lieutenant had stolen the heart of one of the maids in Kailing. At last the surmises and opinions agreed upon a murder, committed in anger and jealousy. Others insisted that it was something much worse than that, for he had been known to speak impudently to a superior officer. Refractory? How absurd! The man's bad reputation arises from quite different causes. It is said that—that—my pen quails, Alfred! There is a rumour of an unspeakable crime. And his brother, too, the young Grösselhofer, was an accomplice.

The excitement was at its height, when one day three officers, among them the little, fat colonel, arrived in Kailing, and betook themselves to Grössel-

hof to conduct a secret investigation. They stood around staring at the stables, the wood-piles, the heaps of straw and manure, they looked over the axes, cramp-irons, and pitchforks, examined the house-servants, with the strict injunction to them to report nothing outside. Nevertheless it was as good as proved that there had been a murder. And was this all? But whom had the man stabbed with a pitchfork or killed with an axe? No one was missing; everyone who had not died a natural death was still there. An old shoemaker at last hit upon an idea, which seemed to find credence on all sides: The criminal had tried to incite a revolt of the peasants against the aristocracy, a horrible uprising with axes, staves, and pitchforks. That was it, of course!

"He will be made shorter by the length of his head," said one.

"And even then he will be as tall as the colonel," responded another.

Who would have thought it! A Nihilist! The conspiracy is spreading nowadays over the entire world. Among all classes and ranks it is taking root, and no one can be trusted any longer. If this man should come here again before he is convicted —beware of him! The young women felt very much depressed about it.

"He will not come often," said the shoemaker. And he was right. Garibal returned but once, and he never went away again.

It is immaterial whether the trial was before

official or martial law. The chief thing is the verdict. The reserve-lieutenant, Garibal Randener, of Kailing in Vordergai, has been found guilty of dishonouring the entire imperial army and is deprived of his officer's rank. The unfortunate man—now listen and shudder—had worked at a dunghill! It seems that the regiment forbids an officer wearing his uniform to perform any common, vulgar, menial task. And this young man, dressed in his soldier's trousers, had, in company with his brother, worked a few hours carting manure on his father's farm. And so this monster has been degraded.

I fear that thou wilt take me for a gossip. *Mein Gott!* But really, Alfred, we none of us knew what to make of it. I, too, am acquainted with that regulation, but I did not suppose such a thing as this was possible. How do we peasants stand now? We are only low, common, dishonourable creatures. This man had stooped to manual labour, to work, which from time immemorial has belonged to the peasant class, and for this he has been declared unworthy of the comradeship of men who wear the Emperor's coat, gamble, fall into debt, and lead women astray! Alfred, canst thou understand it?

At any rate, there are still barbaric countries where retired ministers of state busy themselves with overseeing their farms, even taking part in the work themselves. Yes, there are kings whose sense of honour is so vitiated that with the greatest calmness and indifference they eat the bread grown upon land enriched by manure. The peasants tell a story

of an emperor in Moravia, who once guided the plough and cultivated the soil. And then the superstition went abroad that the entire world, high and low, was dependent upon the peasantry. Heavens! This idea is surely exploded now. In these modern days helmets have taken the place of corn-fields, and if the ground is to be enriched with human corpses—of what use is the manure? This is the story of the disreputable Garibal.

Yesterday when old Marenzel was here again, I offered her little dog a crust of bread. The creature would not even touch it. Officers may not demean themselves, thou seest!

And now let me speak of my good Adam once more. Deep in thought he watches the cultivation of his fields and says softly: "If it be God's will!"

This phrase comes naturally to one working in the earth, so full of mystery. It is fairly maddening to behold the miracles in the midst of which the peasant lives. The year has three hundred and sixty-five days—and how much happens in that short span of time! A marvel of marvels! A night lasting sixteen hours and a few months later a sixteen-hour day; and in this cycle, a gentle budding, a brilliant blossoming, a luxuriant fruition, a weary decline, and the rigidity of death! How long the months of blooming green, how long those of gloomy awaiting, and yet all are within one short year!

When on a holiday evening I stand outside before

the weather-vane, I can now hear the thundering of the avalanches among the mountains. High up on the cliffs the water is gathering under its covering of snow, and pouring its turbid flood into the depths below, loosening everything in its course. The mountains stand out clear and distinct in the moist atmosphere and a mild wind is wafted over the heights. How wonderful are the snow-covered peaks of the Hintergaier range and the Sand Alps, soaring still and white into the leaden sky! In the valleys the young grass is already sprouting, and willows are putting forth their catkins. With you in the city the concerts are now taking place with the fluttering fans and the bored faces behind them. The gardeners are cleaning the parks, the wind is stirring up the dust in the streets, and the tailors are introducing some foolish *môdes* for the spring season. Bah! Why do I use foreign words? Nowhere are they so out of place as among the common people. Nowhere is nonsense so nonsensical as in beloved nature. They pain thee in my letters, thou sayest. Friend, they are the remnants of the dross of culture. Only wait until purgatory has wholly purified me!

Fifteenth Sunday.

Last week a quarrel took place in our house, and what is more, it was between the father and mother. This seldom occurs, for it is as Rocherl says: "Mother carries out what father plans and father plans as mother wishes." This time, however, the little man had his own way—that is to say, the wo-

man really had her way, but accidentally he carried his point also.

The incident was as follows: Two peasants came up here one day from the lower Gai valley, and on the way they were joined by our neighbours, Schragerer and Kulmbock. At about noon they entered our house with such a solemn air that we were all frightened. They laid a proposition before us, the like of which was probably never before made to an occupant of this house. They had come to nominate Adam Weiler, generally known as Adamshäuser in Almgai, for deputy to the *Landtag*. Would he accept the nomination? asked Kulmbock.

At first Adam did not comprehend, but when the meaning dawned upon him, he spread his hands out upon his knees, as is his wont when he wishes to be impressive, and said in a low voice:

"Men, what are you thinking of? I, a deputy in the *Landtag!*"

"It is true," said Kulmbock, "that Adam is having it rather hard at present, with one son in the army and the other with a wounded hand."

"I was not thinking of that," answered Adam. "I am not fitted for such a position. I am only an old, ignorant Alm peasant, who in my whole life have never been farther away than Kailing. I know altogether too little about affairs. I do not even know what is going on in the world now. Oh, no, that would be absurd!"

"Just for that reason, just for that reason!" cried Schragerer. "Just because thou dost not bother

thyself with what the others are doing and art such a home body, we need thee. We do not want to send a man who understands all about politics, for we peasants cannot change these, no matter what we do. Nor do we want to send a gentleman farmer, who is interested in great landed estates; we will send a peasant who is an old settler and who wishes to cling to the ancient ways and customs; for our fields and meadows remain as they always have been and we must manage them according to *our* summer and *our* winter and not according to the weather in other places. Thou, Adam, art one who art obliged to work like a farmhand thyself, and who, for that reason, can comprehend the situation of the peasants. If we had not sent only the rich farmers to the *Landtag*, things might have been different. But there must be a change now. One who gives his whole time to farming is the kind we should prefer to send, and so we have thought of thee, Adam."

"To be sure," said Kulmbock once more, "it is hard for one who is unacquainted with affairs. Not that I would intimate that Adam has not the brains for it. But he is too good, too good. He who would accomplish anything in the *Landtag* should be a hard-hearted man. Yes, our deputy should be as hard as stone. The devil take it all! They cannot make me swallow pitchforks!"

Schragerer looked at Kulmbock: "Neighbour, now thou art trying to dissuade him. For what are we here then?"

"How am I trying to dissuade him?" retorted Kulmbock reproachfully. "It is only right for us to call his attention to things, and also to remind him to look out for someone to take charge of his farm during his absence."

Then Schragerer turned to Adam and said: "Thou art thinking perhaps that it will not do for thee to be weeks away from home. But thou knowest that the deputies receive a compensation. Out of that thou wilt be able to hire a capable farmer and still have something left for thyself. See, thou wilt be doing thyself and us a favour by accepting. Thou hast our entire confidence. All over Gai they say: 'There 's no better man than Adamshäuser.' If thou wilt only say yes, thine election is as good as assured. Come, Adam, accept it!"

"Accept it, Adam!" repeated Kulmbock. "I, too, believe that thou wilt get votes enough. I 'll persuade the people. They see the necessity of sending someone who is every inch a man—yes, every inch a man, and one who is not afraid to speak out!" He looked inquiringly about him.

Here my housefather rose slowly, turned towards the wall, and murmured: "I 'll say nothing in reply."

"Then thou wilt accept?"

"The dev— No!" shouted Adam.

"That 's a nice answer," said Kulmbock. "To be angry about it, too!"

"Angry! Why should I be angry?" retorted

my Adam, stretching out his arms. "I am very much pleased. Very much pleased. But I will not do it, all the same. Not as long as I live!" He seated himself on the wooden block in the chimney corner and began to breathe heavily.

"*Mein Gott*, he 's got it again!" cried the housemother. "Whenever he gets excited he has the asthma. Oh, there 's nothing but misery in this world!" Then turning confidentially towards the messengers she said: "It can't be necessary for him to decide this moment. Give him a few days' time. He will think it over. Wilt thou not, father? Thou wilt think it over?"

But Adam was fully occupied with trying to breathe. "It is truly a cross to be so afflicted," sympathised Kulmbock. The men wished him a speedy recovery and promised to return in two days.

As soon as they had gone the housemother prepared the witches'-weed, and after Adam's breathing was somewhat eased she began to labour with him. If he did not know how to make the most of himself, then she must do it for him, she said. It was very entertaining to hear them.

"Thou must be a fool to refuse such a thing as that," said she.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "that would be a pretty sight! Thou wouldst have to stand behind me in the *Landtag* with the weed ready in case I should be seized with asthma in the midst of a speech."

"Come now, thou wouldst not get excited with speaking. If, as they say, the majority of the

deputies sit for weeks like dumb men, I don't believe thou wouldst wear thyself out."

"Why of course a man would sit still when he hears everything going against him; when they introduce nothing but new questions which mean ruin to the peasants. Even a man with strong lungs would be silenced by that."

"Well, be silent then," she advised, "if it will not help matters to speak. But thou wouldst get thy pay just the same."

Then Adam looked at his wife with a severer expression than I had ever seen on my housefather's face. In a somewhat milder tone she said: "He who has children should not despise money. One would make all sorts of acquaintances, too, who might be useful to one. Think of Valentin. Who knows but what thou mightest do something for him if thou wert a deputy. Think of Franzel; he will not always stay at home."

"And why not? Since time immemorial we have stayed on this farm."

"*Mein Gott*, but if he can find his fortune elsewhere——"

"He shall stay!" cried the housefather, excitedly. "And thou mayest just stop thy foolish talk, thy wicked talk! The idea of letting oneself be paid to further one's own interests!"

"*O du lieber Gott!* How many other people do the same! That is why they sit there, to further their own interests."

"Don't twist my words around, wife! It makes

a difference whether one seeks to further the interests of one's class or of one's own family. Does it not?"

He was trembling with excitement. His shoulders heaved. And the attack came on worse than ever. The housemother pretended not to notice it and busied herself indifferently about the fire. He might struggle a little, she perhaps thought, and it would only serve him right. Why should he work himself into such a rage over things that were of no account?

He held his mouth over the smoke of the crackling herb, but the attack refused to yield this time. It was pitiful to see him struggle for breath; the veins on his forehead and neck swelled as if about to burst, his eyes protruded, and his lips twitched.

"*Jesus Maria!* Rocherl!" screamed the housemother. The terrified lad took down the consecrated taper from the wall that it might be ready to light. Barbel ran to the spring for fresh water, with which she bathed the sick man's face, all the time crying: "Father! Father! Father!"

Feeling after her hand he clutched her arm and cried: "O child!" and he looked at her with an expression of unutterable pain. His lashes were wet with tears. "Thou art my beloved child!" he said, at last breathing more freely. And now the relief came.

As far as I know the housemother never again urged his election to the *Landtag*. Two days later Kulmbock returned to inquire if Adam had thought

the matter over. She replied: "It would be wiser for thee to say nothing to him about it. It would be only a waste of words."

"That 's exactly what I said at first," cried Kulmbock, almost joyfully. "We shall have to look for someone else. And if it should turn out to be one of thy neighbours, of course Adam would vote for him. My greetings to him, please." With which shrewd remark, Kulmbock trudged off, bearing himself in a most dignified manner.

Dost thou still remember from thy schooldays anything about Palm Sunday? How our Lord, riding on an ass, made His entry into Jerusalem with a palm-branch in His hand? There is more to it than that. To-day I went into Hoisendorf with a huge branch of white-willow over my shoulder. From each farm the men came carrying similar branches and the priest consecrated them in the church. Then followed a most dramatic scene between the priest and the schoolmaster. First a procession was formed which marched around the church, and as it re-entered, the teacher slammed the door in the priest's face, leaving him crying aloud out in the cold wind, and the congregation allowed it to happen without a murmur. "Well, that is going too far," I thought to myself, "that is going too far!" As I was about to hasten over to the teacher, who was standing before the door disputing with the priest outside, I noticed that they were speaking in Latin. And then I realised that the incident was only a portion of the religious ceremony, and that

the farmhand from distant parts had narrowly escaped making a fool of himself. This scene is intended to represent the dispute between the Saviour and the scribes and Pharisees, who have cast out the Prophet and Seer from their company for ever.

Amid these surroundings a little religion is gradually creeping into my heart. Thou saidst once that not until a man is seventy does he learn to know God. I assure thee, a farmhand requires less time than that. I have often stood in city churches trying to approach Deity by means of the prayers. It was all in vain; God did not find me nor did I find Him. But when a man stands in a village church, he does not remain standing long, he falls on his knees and soon becomes one of the suffering, believing worshippers. The mournful services of Passion Week, which began to-day, have a certain fascination about them. Thou shouldst only see how these poor, care-laden creatures worship the Sacred Mysteries. Oh, no, religion is by no means an exploded theory, as many believe; it is nature, a part of human nature itself, like love and hate.

After the mass, which to-day was accompanied by the smothered tones of the organ, the schoolmaster stepped quietly from bench to bench distributing "palm-branches." The idiot! Why did he overlook my Barbel? She, too, turned her face away from him; she was sitting directly behind a pillar. And usually they are so friendly with each other. But I have noticed that she no longer reads

his books. His manner towards me is somewhat changeable. Sometimes he seems to dislike me and then to-day he gave me one of the finest branches. What do I want with it? The huge boughs which I carried with me the housemother has put for safe keeping up on the roof of the house. In the summer, during thunder-storms, Rocherl says they lay a piece of this wood upon the hearth-fire, that the rising smoke may drive the evil spirits out of the clouds.

But for what shall I keep my palm-branch? Might it not be the palm signifying martyrdom? Or is the Palm Sunday bough meant to protect me also from an evil spirit? O Barbel! How will it be in summer when the lightning strikes?

Like a tiny red light from out the dark Middle Ages, a human heart greets thee.

Easter Sunday, the sixteenth of the year.

My dear, loyal Friend:

Gladly will I follow thy suggestion and make no further reference in my letters to the contents of thine. Thou wishest my story of Adamshaus to be undisturbed by other topics. Something like a romance! Who can tell? It may develop into that yet. It would read very well in a book, but in reality it is sometimes devilish uncomfortable.

I beg of thee not to show my journal to anyone. It would make me impossible for all future time. At the most, have it printed, if thou wilt, then no one will believe it. What if, during this Passion

Week, a few fine, cultured people had been here, or even the editorial staff of *The Continental Post!* They would most surely have found material for their witticisms, and they would have plundered this kingdom of mystery like vandals.

Passion Week here is a great, unique, and sacred festival. Even in the work all worldly aims are set aside, and the necessary household tasks are imbued with a peculiar atmosphere, of which the people outside have no conception. Had I not imbibed it in my earliest infancy, I could not have comprehended, admired, or honoured it as a last farewell from a decaying world. Do not laugh at me, philosopher, but the resurrection seems very real to me here. Souls, long since passed to their eternal rest, are hovering over us. On Monday the wooden crucifix was taken from the wall and placed on the table. In the evening we gathered around it and Franzel or Rocherl read portions of the Passion story, to which all listened with the greatest reverence. Not until then did the father and mother partake of their first bit of warm food that day. They are in such an exalted mood that it borders on ecstasy. I should never have thought it possible. On Maundy Thursday we had a somewhat heartier supper than usual, consisting of pudding and cress salad, after which we went to the spring and washed our feet. And then I noticed how the boys ran barefoot over the grass, which is now beginning everywhere to become green. Even Barbel followed their example, only she seemed not to

touch the moist ground with her feet, but to hover above it like a soul not yet redeemed. Thou art thinking, perhaps, that this walking over the grass is done in remembrance of the Saviour's walk to the Mount of Olives. Here again the people are inconsistent in their Christianity. Whoever walks with bare feet over the green grass on Maundy Thursday will not be struck by lightning in the following summer. On Friday and Saturday we went to church. The windows and pictures were draped with dark blue cloth, the large crucifix was laid upon the floor in the centre of the church, and the people knelt around it, bowing low and kissing the wounds. The bells were hushed, the organ was silent. Only the wooden clappers used in the Good Friday mass were struck from time to time, while the priest softly murmured the mysterious service.

Late Friday evening in the dark living-room of his house, I found my Adam, who, thinking himself alone, was kneeling before the crucifix deep in prayer. And I thought I heard him sob. The man must be greatly concerned about something, but what it is I cannot imagine.

On Saturday morning an amusing incident occurred. When the sexton rang the great bell in the belfry instead of the matin bell, the game-keeper of the neighbouring forests ran around the church as if mad, covering both ears with his hands and calling out to stop that damned ringing or there would be the devil to pay.

The teacher asked him what he meant, and this

is the reason he gave. It seems that for nearly a week he had been keeping a close watch over a mountain cock in a pine-tree. And lo, the fears of Nimrod were realised and the bell had frightened the creature away—only a few days before the hunt! Perhaps thou wilt soon read of a law proposed by the worthy hunting clubs forbidding the ringing of bells during Passion Week out of consideration to sporting interests.

The people here were obliged to obtain the consent of the hunters to light their festal fire on Easter night. This fire was built on the Kulmplatte, our own mountain, behind the grove. The young men of Almgai had been working for days piling up the wood and when the Feast of the Resurrection was over and the solemnity of Lent and the mourning of Passion Week were suddenly transformed into joyousness and boisterous mirth, everyone from far and near assembled on these heights.

It was a mild moonlight night, the ground was freed from snow, and up among the branches of an old, weather-beaten pine-tree sat the musicians. They had permission to pipe to their heart's content, for there are no mountain cocks on our mountain this year.

Rocherl, Franzel, and I went up, of course. Yet the lad with the wounded hand, which he carries in a sling, felt little inclination to take part in the festivities. Even the shooting and whistling and firing of guns were insufficient to arouse his interest either in the jokes of the young men or in the coquetry of

the girls. There was one boisterous fellow among the former, whom they called Saufüssel (Pig's-feet). That is his real name, and he is said to be a son of old Marenzel. This youth began Easter night gaily but ended it in disgrace. He was very free with his vulgar jests and unseemly remarks. At first the men laughed at him, but the girls fled from him in horror.

The huge fire on the Kulmplatte soared in awful splendour into the dark night sky. Around it Easter songs were sung, but some of them were so worldly that many a young girl covered her ears with her hands. The lads jumped and wrestled and shouted. There were a number of smaller fires lighted near by, across which they leapt. One boy would mischievously place small hindrances in the way of another, and the victim would then be marked by having his nose blackened with a charred stick.

Even my Rocherl finally joined in the mirth, being urged from all sides, and Saufüssel dared him to leap over the fire. Since one leaps with one's legs, not with one's hands, he was ready. While he was running, preparatory to the spring, Saufüssel, all unnoticed, placed a charred rope across his path. Rocherl jumped, caught his foot, and would have fallen directly into the flames had I not happened to be standing close by to catch him. Saufüssel burst into a coarse laugh over his great joke—but the rest of us thought differently about it.

"Although it is holy Easter night," I said, "I am

sure I shall be allowed to perform a menial task." And then I seized Saufüssel. He assured me imploringly that it was only a joke.

"And this, too, is only a joke," I answered sharply. The avenging angels soon surrounded us by the dozen, especially the women. At first I thought the punishment would be a light one if the miscreant were left in the hands of the wenches, but the men were obliged to interfere to save the lad's life. The girls would have strangled him, torn him limb from limb. "To think of his throwing our dear Adamshäuser-Rocherl, who has a wounded hand, into the fire! The wretch, the toad, he deserves to be thrown into the fire himself!"

And indeed the young furies, some of whom were not alone angry but beautiful as well, were quite capable of doing it. At our intervention, however, they finally satisfied themselves with binding Saufüssel's hands behind his back, singeing his locks, and blackening his face. They then chased him, as a dog chases a hare, over the hill and he has not been seen since.

My Rocherl was now the object of warmest sympathy. Then I noticed how this lad, whose silent sorrow over his lost hand glorifies his classic beauty, is worshipped by all the girls. But he seems entirely unconscious of the fact, or else is indifferent to it. He finally escaped from them.

As we were walking home together, with the broad moonlit hills peacefully encircling us, the lad

suddenly remarked in an indescribably sad voice: "What a beautiful world it is!"

"Yes, for those who appreciate it," I replied.

Silently we walked beside each other. Once or twice he seemed to wish to speak, yet he refrained. At last I said: "Now the lovely springtime is coming."

He shook his head. Then he stopped and leaned against a tree.

"Rocherl, Rocherl! Is something wrong? What is it, Rocherl?"

"Hansel," he said softly, then stopped again.

"What ails thee, Rocherl?"

With a deep sigh he said, more to the tree than to me: "Barbel has been crying . . ."

Barbel has been crying! What does that mean? Barbel, the reticent Barbel, who used to be so cheerful before the farmhand from distant parts appeared, and who once said that there was no chimney-corner in heaven for sad people! She has wept! When? And why?

The lad said nothing further. As we approached the house he gave me his hand, which he was not in the habit of doing. It was as if by confiding to me his secret he had raised me to the rank of friend.

"Good night, Hansel!"

I think I did not sleep half an hour that night.

Barbel has been crying. . . .

Seventeenth Sunday.

I am not even to mention thee again, but thou alone art to blame. So I will go on with my story.

The festivities of Easter are over. Like the sound of many waters, a cry of joy borne on a thousand voices rises to heaven from these human hearts: "Christ is risen and spring is here!"

The valleys below us are tinged with a soft green, which no artist, ancient or modern, has ever been able to paint. They all lack the true atmosphere, the atmosphere of nature. The turbid streams, which for weeks have been bearing the once white winter to the valleys below, rush down through the meadows. Farther up on the high mountains, towering majestically in the background, everything is still unchanged. Yonder all is stiff and frozen. And while the warm April sun is shining on our Gai, those distant heights are shrouded in grey mist.

The task we have before us in the pastures and fields, where the grass is to grow, is a charming one. They are to be washed, combed, fed, and watered. First of all comes the nourishment, then the grass is raked and all the stubble and dry twigs removed, and the ground cleared of stones and mole-hills, until it resembles a smoothly ironed cloth. Next water is forced in a gutter from the ravine up to the field, and here and there little holes are dug that the moisture may trickle through the earth for days and spread like a glistening sheet over the ground. The earth thirstily sucks it in, the clods soften, and among the withered remnants of last year's grass the green young shoots spring to life. This watering the fields is a pleasant pastime, and I am constantly digging with my hoe to increase the flow of water

from the ravine with which to refresh the thirsty meadows. When the ground has enough it closes its million little mouths and the water runs back to the valley like a shimmering veil and the gutter is shut off.

Yesterday, I saw my housefather standing in the middle of the yard, gazing towards the roof of the house and shaking his head. What did it mean that this year they had not yet come? The saying is: "On Lady Day the swallows return." It is a bad omen when this auspicious bird remains away. Adam had already seen them flying over the Hoisendorf church-spire. And were they coming no more to Adamshaus? What did it mean?

"Father," I said to him, "if thou art looking for the swallows, then I can help thee to solve the mystery. The swallows will come less and less often and will finally cease altogether."

"Then thou thinkest that the Judgment Day is near?" he asked.

"The Judgment Day will hardly be the cause of keeping away our beloved migratory birds; the blame lies with their murderers." And then I told him how in Dalmatia, in Southern Tyrol, and in Italy the migratory birds were caught and killed.

He listened speechless; with clasped hands he stood before me and finally said: "Every now and then it really seems as if our Lord God had gone to sleep."

If He is only sleeping He will re-awaken, I thought. In these days mankind steals by heaven's

gate softly, on tiptoe, and is only too glad to find Him asleep. I wonder, if at some future time we shall not knock frantically at this gate to arouse Him!

This week when sitting beside each other at table or when thrown together in our work, I have stolen a glance now and then at the girl's eyes. They are the same large, soft child eyes, although I noticed in them a peculiar moist brightness. Perhaps that is what Rocherl took for tears. She also gazes frequently up at the gable of the roof. The chickadees and finches are there. Is she not satisfied with these? And there is besides one lonely sparrow. I am sometimes seized with the temptation to do something to offend this girl. I should like for once to see her angry, even though I were the victim. To be treated with such absolute indifference is somewhat dull in the long run.

On Easter Monday, the hunter, Konrad, who had shot Rocherl, came to our house. He entered very politely, having laid aside his gun, his feather, and his hunter's vanity. But the housemother greeted him with the remark that she would have preferred to see his back rather than his face.

"Is Rocherl at home?" he inquired almost humbly.

"The poacher?" asked the housemother bitterly; "he has probably taken his gun into the woods. Where else should he be?"

Then the housefather added more good-naturedly: "He has not yet returned from church."

The hunter went out and sat down on the edge of

the watering-trough in the yard. We looked at him through the window, trying to imagine what it all meant. We wondered if he might be planning to do Rocherl some further injury. Or had he at last lost his position, because he had fired at human beings?

In this region on Easter Sunday a basket filled with smoked meat, hard-boiled eggs, white bread, and thinly shaved horse-radish root is carried from every house to the church, where all good things, as was the case the preceding week with the palms, receive the Easter blessing. The Easter feast always begins with this consecrated food, and any stranger who happens to visit the house at this time is served with a plateful. So Adam now said to his wife: "Mother, take out a few slices of Easter meat to the hunter."

In reply to his request, he received nothing but a look of indignation. Show hospitality to the enemy of her son! Then it seemed to occur to her that a Christian should not allow her hatred to extend to consecrated things. She fetched the basket from the cupboard, brought a gaily painted plate, and began cutting the meat. The portion was not meagre. The large slices of meat, the generous pieces of egg, and the light brown bread, all sprinkled with bits of horse-radish, nearly filled the plate. Just as she was in the act of taking it up to carry it out, she withdrew her hand quickly. "No, our Lord cannot require such a thing of me." She returned the plate to the cupboard, which she then locked, putting the key into her pocket.

"Thou art right, mother," I reflected; "thou hast true backbone."

The hunter still sat outside waiting. He rose once, held his mouth over the spout, and drank. Then he reseated himself and waited. At last Rocherl appeared, dressed in his grey, green-bordered, holiday attire. A fresh flower, which he had probably picked in the valley, adorned his hat; or perhaps someone had given it to him. He carried his right arm in a sling made of a bright red neckerchief.

The hunter advanced, meeting him at the board walk leading into the yard.

"I have been waiting for thee," he said.

"Indeed!" answered the lad, without pausing in his walk.

"Wilt thou sit down here a moment, Rocherl? I do not like to go into the house. I want to speak to thee about something."

Rocherl, somewhat against his will, sat down on the trough.

"See here, Rocherl," began the hunter, "I—I wanted to ask thee how thy hand is getting along."

"Thou canst see that for thyself," answered Rocherl, swinging his arm in the sling. "How should it be getting along? It has a hole in it."

"Is the bullet out yet?"

"Probably. Because now it is beginning to heal."

"Canst thou use the hand already?"

"I can't even bend it."

"Does it pain thee still?"

"I should say it did. Especially at night."

"If we were only sure that the lead were out!" said the hunter. Then he was silent and seemed to be seeking for appropriate words. After a while he said: "It 's a shame that it had to happen. Last Saturday I received my wages for three months."

"That 's good," said Rocherl. "During the holidays one always needs money."

"That is n't what I wanted it for, Rocherl. Dost thou know—see here—I wanted to ask a favour of thee. I never care about going to the tavern; nor do I enjoy playing cards. And I shall have enough for my tobacco."

"Yes," said Rocherl.

"See here, thou shouldst have thy hand examined by a regular doctor, to be sure that the bullet is really out. So, I have been thinking to myself, that this is a debt which I owe thee—say, Rocherl, thou art not angry with me for this?"

Unrolling his blue handkerchief, he produced a purse.

Rocherl rose quickly and angrily.

"My dear Konrad! What I have already suffered with this hand and what I shall still suffer cannot be paid with money. I can well believe that thy conscience troubles thee now, to know that my whole life is ruined. Put thy money up again!"

Leaving the hunter sitting there, he hastened into the house. Konrad gazed a while after him, then passing through the gate he went away across the meadows.

And now I know that our Rocherl is his own mother's son. If the gentlemen in the forest believe that they can make reparation with money, they will have little success with the family at Adamshaus. Some kinds of money are of no value here.

Did I write thee that in the place of our reserved Adam, Kulmbock had been elected to the *Landtag?* His speech of acceptance in the tavern was short but strong:

"Come now," he said, "how pleased they 'll be when I begin to talk! No one shall get around me! The gentlemen are mistaken if they think they can stuff me with the salt meant for cattle! No, indeed! They won't find much cause for amusement in me. A stop must be put to this rascally business. If they want to bribe me they 'll get hold of the wrong man, that 's all. I 'll swallow no shoe-nails!"

So this is the sturdy, clumsy Kulmbock. We must prepare our minds for something quite extraordinary from this deputy. He refuses to swallow shoe-nails! He will put up with no compromises. Yes, my friend, we are sending a savage, a barbarian, from the depths of the forest.

I must just add that I shall soon be turned out of my room. And then I must sleep on the haymow, which will be no penalty, and I am sure no city dame has a more fragrant boudoir than Hansel, the farmhand, will have. In my apartment next to the oxen the Michelmensch is to be lodged. That is a double person, Rocherl tells me, and consists of

Michel and Michelin, and together they are called the Michelmensch.

This life is all so strange and difficult to depict. I have a brilliant idea. Come next summer to Almgai. It is cooler and wilder than in Southern Tyrol, where thou art always tormented by the heat. At the inn in Hoisendorf thou wouldst be made comfortable and thou couldst add to the pleasures of thy holiday idling by lying under the trees and watching the farmhand from Adamshaus drudge, at the same time regaling thyself with a fragrant Havana. But thou wilt be obliged to bring it with thee. The merchants here sell only "*starken Towack.*"

Eighteenth Sunday.

At last they are here, May and the Michelmensch. The first makes me a rich man. Now, old fellow, I can really invite thee to visit me. Now the reception hall is ready. Even in the house the painted flowers on the chests and cupboards are beginning to bloom, when the sun shines in at the window. And thou shouldst see them outside!

It is indeed a most inopportune time for the editor of *The Continental Post* to try and lure me back to the city. But he is making the attempt, and has favoured me with a charming and friendly letter. There need be no further test, he writes flatteringly, for I have brilliantly proved that I possess a character which understands the true significance of a pledge. He shows me great honour! And now he urges that I should return to the nobler

life of civilisation. The city is a perfect paradise in the midst of its blooming gardens. I believe what he says. But then, we also have a paradise and even an Adam thrown in, although the Eve may be lacking. A man, writes my Herr Stein von Stein, who sacrifices himself so bravely to make practical investigations for his profession, is worth twice as much to his paper. He might even go so far as to ask for a higher salary and his request would not fail to be granted. How beautifully this bird sings now! He never sang so well before. I am, of course, blind to my own advantages and I have thanked him heartily for his friendly interest in my person, but I have written him that unfortunately it would be impossible to follow his fatherly advice, because I had promised to remain with my present employer the entire year. Besides, I was in excellent health, and had in all my life never learned so much as I had here, nor had I ever earned so much. He will be greatly disappointed—on account of the twenty thousand *Kronen*.

The Michelmensch have, most assuredly, had a hard life of it. Michel worked as farmhand for more than sixty years in this region, and Michelin as a servant forty-six years. For twenty years they were sweethearts—in secret, of course, making love through the window. When they became tired of that, and as the marriage laws were being enforced, they were united openly and since then have been called the Michelmensch. They had always been capable workers, but they had saved nothing.

Michel was a ne'er-do-well and every Sunday he had drunk a pint of wine at the tavern. Michelin had squandered her wages on her child. It was a boy, who when very young had earned his bread as a shepherd on the Alm and in his eleventh year was frozen to death in a snow-storm. This is the story of these old people, who now go as paupers from house to house to be cared for a week or two at a time. They are like the Lodger, known as "'*s Nullerl*" in Morres's comedy. I suppose that the theatres are very gay now and give one an appetite for the supper afterwards. Here, however——.

And so the Michelmensch have come to Adamshaus. The pair carried a big wood-cutter's basket strapped over the right shoulder of one and over the left shoulder of the other. Together with their sticks this Michelmensch had six feet, four hands, two heads and one basket. The little withered couple were very talkative as they entered the house. Michel settled himself comfortably in the chimney-corner as if he belonged there, nodded constantly with his little white head, his eyes riveted on the face of his chattering wife, whose words he acccompanied by a play of his features, opening his toothless mouth when she spoke excitedly, contracting his brow, when she complained of the rudeness of a neighbour, and stretching his wrinkled face into a grin when she praised the charitableness of some peasant woman.

Michelin tried at once to make herself useful in the house and helped in many ways, as if wishing

to repay Adam's people for allowing her Michel to sit in the warm chimney-corner and to receive a special dish of porridge, since he had no teeth with which to masticate the food at table.

Later they were settled in my stall chamber. Michelin unpacked the basket. There were pillows, felt slippers, innumerable boxes, jugs, and bottles, shining knives and forks, sewing materials, soap, candle ends, pictures of saints, rosaries, and various trifles. They arranged them with great care and then regarded them from all sides with the tenderest affection to be sure that nothing was injured. I never saw people manifest such heart-felt joy over their possessions as these two paupers expressed over the contents of their basket. The old man began childishly to play with the little glasses and jugs, but his wife took them away from him at once, wiping them on a rag and replacing them in a safe corner of the basket.

"What art thou thinking of, thou simpleton?" she said to him tenderly but reproachfully. "A little pitcher like that must not be handled so roughly! That belongs to Hieserl when he comes back."

The old man giggled. "He 'll never come back. He 's as dead as a door-nail, Hieserl is."

"Oh, now, don't be foolish. Hieserl dead!"

"They found his little body and buried it!"

"O thou, Michel!" she said, threateningly, "something will happen to thee if thou dost not keep still! What dost thou know about it? When the flax is in bloom, Hieserl will be with us."

"May be, may be!" admitted the old man. "If thou sayest it, it must be true." And he added tearfully: "I am sleepy."

Then they enveloped themselves in a darned woollen cloak, cuddling close to one another, not unlike a philopena in an almond shell. Soon afterwards a melodious duet from the Michelmensch filled the air. Perhaps Hieserl will at least visit his mother in her dreams. She cannot even count the number of years the boy has already been dead, but she is positive the people lied who said that they had found the bones of the shepherd lad on the mountain, and she is also quite sure that Hieserl will come this summer before the flax blooms. I truly believe, when one possesses faith in such abundance, it cannot be so hard to be poor.

One evening I overheard Michelin praying aloud a prayer, the words of which ran somewhat as follows: "*Herr Jesus, komm bald; wir warten dein. Hau zu, hau zu, aber lach dazu. Schön Dank, dass du unser König bist Herr Jesu Christ!*" (Lord Jesus, come soon; we are waiting for Thee. Strike, if Thou must, but laugh when Thou dost. We are thankful to Thee that Thou art our King, Lord Jesus Christ!). I asked her the next day to give me the exact words. "Those we will never tell!" was her reply, and she turned her back on me forthwith.

Such are the treasures of this poor couple. Yet they often seem a little sad withal, and occasionally they may be heard murmuring: "He is sleeping too long!" meaning God.

These are the guests who now occupy my room. Adam is supposed to keep the Michelmensch one week, but seeing how happy they are here, and knowing that they do not receive such good treatment everywhere, he has asked me if I would allow them to have the room a while longer. In return for the favour I should receive a *Vergeltsgott* (God bless you). A *Vergeltsgott* is highly esteemed in Adamshaus, and it is carefully put away and saved to add to the joys of the future life. The family has already collected a large number of them.

My relations to this mountain farm have at last come to be of some importance. I am of use. I am really useful to them, and they acknowledge it frankly, and I, very happy about it, reply: "God grant that it may be so!" Now I have no further anxiety; I shall hold out to the end.

Canst thou tell me, philosopher, whence comes the word work? It is said that in olden times this word had the same meaning as need and necessity. And it may be true that some people only work when driven to it by necessity. But I wonder if the word may not be derived from one signifying ploughshare or harrow, and therefore originally referring only to such work as that of tilling the soil. Working the earth, or some similar expression, the philologists would perhaps use. Then I could so easily prove that ploughing is the fundamental idea of all work, and by making this assertion I should soon earn a reputation for myself.

We have been ploughing since the middle of

April. But first of all the ploughshares, the scythes, and the harrows required putting in order. And then it was that I discovered a most useful comrade in myself, namely: the blacksmith. One never learns anything in vain. So I sharpened the ploughshare, bound the plough-beam with iron rings, and repaired the worn-out tires on the wheels. I succeeded so well in this that my housefather became quite anxious lest I should demand higher wages. If he only knew how well my year of service with him is being paid!

My training as a blacksmith was most fortunate for me, otherwise my first day's work at the plough might have lost me my place. Thou must try and picture it to thyself, Alfred! A pair of oxen is hitched in front of the plough, Rocherl leading them by the horns. I walk behind, holding the plough by the handles, and I am supposed to guide it in such away that it cuts and turns over the strips of grass about a foot wide and half a foot deep. That makes the furrow. If this furrow is too narrow, nothing is accomplished; if it is too wide, then it lifts the plough and the ploughshare only scratches the grass a little. And it is holding the plough firmly, always cutting the same width and depth, where the ground is sometimes level, sometimes sandy or stony, which is such a fearful strain upon human flesh. At first it threw me so powerfully from side to side, that Rocherl laughed aloud. Close behind me came Barbel with the hoe, to smooth over the badly turned furrows and to dig

up the roots of grass which had been skipped by the ploughshare. The more imperfectly I performed my task, the more the girl had to do. Thou canst think how that spurred me on to the utmost exertion of my intellectual and physical powers. The beginning was horrible, but by perseverance and practice I succeeded—and now I can plough.

Just imagine a farmhand who can plough! But oh, this smell of earth! This exquisite smell of earth! It is so fresh, so cool and spicy as it is wafted against my face. I have no words with which to describe it to thee. It is as if one had drunken of Rhine wine, so intoxicating, so exhilarating, so strengthening is the breath of the freshly turned earth. I had never before dreamed what this life-giving breath was like. I longed to shout for very joy, I was so happy!

On the slopes we plough from the bottom upward. And by the time we have reached the top, Adam is already beginning to sow the seed. As the elderly man, with uncovered head, in all humility and at the same time with dignity, makes the earth his offering of grain, he seems to me almost priest-like and holy. The first handful of seed which he scatters he raises reverently to his lips and kisses it as something sacred. I have never in all my life felt as I have in these days. It is as if I had found my home! I am like the prodigal son at last come back to his father's house! Yes, my friend, this is the old, the great noble class. First, the God-creator, and then his labourers, the tillers of the

soil. He who lays his own hand into the open furrows of earth must be convinced of this.

After the ploughing comes the sowing and after the sowing the harrowing, when by means of the "*Aren*," as the harrow is here called, the seed is covered with earth. Then we leave it alone, and go away and pray for rain and sunshine. No one is so entirely dependent upon God as the farmer. Man can cultivate, plough and sow; but this is very little. The grain that he has sown decays in the ground and becomes more worthless than before. He has no hand in that which now takes place. He can neither further it nor hinder it, but, entirely helpless, can only wait and see what will happen under the changing sun and the dreamy clouds in the sky. He has indeed been the cause but it is not his work. And as the true farmer dislikes to remain idle, and since he can do nothing to further his affairs with his own hands, he folds these hands and prays: "Our Father! Give us this day our daily bread!"

I believe that if the peasant were an atheist nothing more would grow on his land. "Have faith in God and cultivate well!" is his motto. The ancient conception of the venerable Lord God with the white beard and the sign of the Trinity over His head, why deprive us of this, you wise men? And even should He not exist, the mere idea is of greater benefit to the believing people than are you, with all your wisdom and philosophy.

I am discovering, however, that we can after all

help on the growth. Next week we are to go over the freshly sown fields with a hoe, to break up the clods of earth into small bits; and we are to remove the weeds, and protect the sprouting seeds from the trampling of grazing cattle, until the day arrives when, to the accompaniment of the whizzing scythe, we may harvest the grain.

The farmhand from distant parts is now wearing an extremely coarse unbleached blouse of Valentin's. But it is airy. The other men in this region also wear similar garments on workdays. The vainer ones among them sometimes have theirs dyed blue in Kailing, so that the dirt will be less conspicuous. We no longer need coats and our trousers are of light-weight linen. Ah, if thou couldst but know what a comfortable costume it is! How freely one can breathe in it, how cool one is when at work, and how unrestrained one's limbs! If the people of our class were only once conscious of what a misfortune their fashionable garments are! If they only realised these incredible, these tragi-comic fetters! It is impossible for the germs of either disease or sin to escape through the smooth, dye-soaked, two-and-three-fold casings. Everything remains imprisoned. City people think derisively of shirt-sleeves. He who is shocked at shirt-sleeves is also shocked at the bare arm, and then at work.

I cannot understand our pretty Barbel in this respect. She is still wearing her woollen winter jacket. The housemother does not approve, but Barbel told her that she had given away her short

summer jacket to poor Dame Luckner to be made into a coverlet for her baby. The beggars always manage to come when they can find Barbel at home. Then they receive more, and there is another reason. The girl knows how to listen when they relate their trials. And when she speaks a comforting word to them, that is a gift in itself. It must be as my Adam once said: "*Das Teilgeben ist schon gut und das Teilnehmen ist noch besser!*" (Charity is good and sympathy is still better).

The Michelmensch, the pair, are infatuated with this girl. He, especially, and he often gives her a little bouquet of daisies. Of course he is obliged to do this surreptitiously when his wife's back is turned. But as old women have eyes behind as well as before, Michelin once discovered what Michel was doing, and she made things hot for him. In the process the old woman thawed out completely. Thou canst imagine how pleasant it must be for a man of eighty to feel that he is still capable of awakening jealousy in the bosom of his first love. Yet I cannot get over the fact that the girl shows more favour to this, her latest admirer, than she does to me.

I can hardly drink in enough of this glorious May air. Late in the evening, while the oxen are munching their hay in the stall—for now as workers they naturally receive better feed than in the winter when they are idle—I often sit out of doors on the bench, watching the stars come out one by one, and listening to the sound of the rushing water in the

ravine, growing louder and louder every day. On several occasions I have noticed Rocherl making little bouquets with his left hand, and carrying them to the house, where he lays them on Barbel's window-sill. The next day these offerings of brotherly love are withered and he then replaces them with fresh ones. Really, the girl seems to care more for the flowers of the old pauper.

One evening I discovered Rocherl standing by the cherry-tree, swearing all the oaths that he could muster, and apparently grinding his teeth over those which did not occur to him.

"What a peculiar prayer thou art offering, Rocherl!"

Striking his head with his fist, he cried: "I am going to the dogs!"

"Does thy hand pain thee so?"

"It is Barbel!" he groaned.

"Barbel! Thy sister! Is something wrong with her?"

"She likes every man who comes here better than she does me!"

"Every man who comes here! Whom dost thou mean?"

"I know very well."

Could he mean me? Before I had time to think, he fell into my arms, moaned, sighed, and at last succeeded in saying: "I love her! I shall just kill myself!"

Trying to turn the whole matter into a jest, I said in feigned indignation: "Why, Rocherl, I believe

thou art jealous of thy sister. If so, we shall be obliged to fight a duel, and, of course, I should kill the old pauper. What right has he to give her flowers, indeed? I should probably receive a few blows also, for there is more space for them on my broad back than on thy slim one. And Barbel would have to anoint my wounds with cobbler's wax to draw out the blows."

He laughed a loud, shrill laugh. Then more calmly he said: "It is very easy for thee to jest about it, but I know whom I mean." Whereupon he went to bed, and the water continued its murmuring in the valley.

Nineteenth Sunday.

In this letter, my friend, I shall be obliged to write for two Sundays. Not because my fingers have grown stiff, nor because in these days I prefer wandering out of doors to sitting bent over an old chest. It is something else which has prevented me from writing. It is a long story and it strikes deep. If this were only a novel and I a novelist! *Mein Gott*, how interesting it would be! But it is merely fate and I am a poor human being.

Thou must already have suspected that something is wrong in this house. Or has it not yet occurred to thee? Well, then, suppose for instance: A good-for-nothing city gentleman, who, full of boasting and artful design, goes among peasants to win a wager. In a mountain home, where, with all confidence he has been received in a family of good-hearted people, he betrays the darling of them all,

the only daughter and sister, an angelically beautiful, innocent child. She takes her own life; the father and mother die of broken hearts, and the adventurer, after having brought ruin upon this peasant family, returns to the city to collect his wager. Would that not be exciting and modern?

No, it is preposterous of me even to suggest such a horrible tragedy. Yet, it would be despicably vain of me to say that such a thing could never have entered my thoughts. For I have passed through dangerous moments, when it has seemed to me that God was deserting me. But how dare a man, himself saved from crime, rejoice when he sees others in sorrow, perhaps in sin?

Now, I must tell thee a straight story, or thou wilt think I have lost my senses. My oldest acquaintance in Hoisendorf is, as thou knowest, the schoolmaster, Guido Winter. It was he who directed me to Adamshaus in January, and then tried to prevent my coming here. Afterwards our relations became somewhat strained, but now I understand the reason. The man is about ten years younger than myself, and he is not exactly a beauty. He is so pitted from small-pox that Rocherl says he looks as if he had sat on his face in a cane-seated chair. At the same time he is awkward and clumsy, a little obsequious, a little proud, and a little obstinate, besides possessing other peculiarities; but on the whole, fairly good company. We usually meet on Sundays for a chat. I visit him on account of his books and because he receives my newspaper, which

only has an attraction for me now, since it is forbidden in Adamshaus. I should call it the apple from the Tree of Knowledge, were I inclined to be witty. But to-day I have something more important to say to thee.

I had noticed on several occasions that the teacher was watching me suspiciously. Of course, he cannot understand me. He fails to comprehend this farm-hand from distant parts, and for some time I have felt inclined to tell him my story. But a number of stories are now accumulating, and one depends upon the other, like those in *A Thousand and One Nights*, and there are still so many weeks remaining! What the end of it will all be—God only knows!

On this beautiful spring day as I started home, the schoolmaster joined me. He went out of his way to do this, but I imagine that he had been planning it for some time. We walked towards the stream instead of up the mountain, descending into the glen and out in the direction of the meadows, where, close beside the fast disappearing snow-banks, the young grass is sprouting from among the withered roots of last year, and where the yellow primroses are blooming, and the slender larches are resuming their mantle of green and sending forth their tender red catkins. Here and there grey crags project from the mountain-sides, and a jagged wall of rock gleams in the background of the valley. Ah, if I could only paint! Pooh! The landscape will not run away. It is the people one should learn to paint!

At first I think we talked of Adam's Franzel, the schoolboy. The teacher said that he had a bright mind; perhaps not the first in his classes, but he was very observing in everything relating to animals, plants, and stones. He was bored by books, but whenever he could think out things for himself and draw his own conclusions, he was ahead of the entire school.

"We must try and send him to the city," added the teacher.

"Quit your talk about the city!" I interrupted. "What should he do in the city? There are enough clever people there already. Why not let a few bright minds stay with the peasants? They, as well as the others, have hard nuts to crack, and at least there are kernels in theirs! If all the gifted ones leave it is no wonder that things turn out as they do!"

"They turn out the same when they stay," answered the teacher. "Things happen because they must happen, and so one feels like saving those who show some intelligence by transferring them to more propitious surroundings, before they degenerate and miserably perish in the wilderness."

"I once wrote something similar to that myself," answered the farmhand from distant parts. "That is, in the way one writes to one's friends. But now I think differently. Ah, the mystery of the clod of earth! The native soil!"

"Native soil," said the teacher laughing, "that is a platitude fit only for the rag fair."

"Are you in earnest? Then, with your permis-

sion, I must give you my opinion on the subject. You have probably already considered the question of nationality, which is to-day occupying the entire world and overturning empires. Well, now tell me, what causes this agitation? The nations? Yes, certainly, but to a still greater extent the land itself is the cause. You smile to hear me say that the question of nationality is a geographical one."

And he laughed as I continued: "If it simply concerned nations, *mein Gott!* the Germans, scattered over the whole world, could easily come together, if they would give up the soil and the land they now possess in exchange for that occupied at the present time by the Slavs and the French. A modern Bismarck would need only to take a map of the world and move the nations as one would move chessmen."

"That is impossible!" said the teacher.

"It is so impossible," I said, "that such a proposition has seldom been made in earnest. And why it is impossible, is because people cling to their own native soil."

"Then you mean that a single man would hold faster to his soil than to his race?"

"The figures prove it."

"It is a crime to say it!" the teacher cried, indignantly.

"You must call Another to account for that—Him, Who has created mankind as it is."

"But uncivilised man is a nomad, and does not stick to one piece of ground."

"And civilised man can only thrive and perfect himself when he stays in one place. That this place, the native soil, should always belong to the same race, is the burning question in this world conflict."

"If so much depends upon remaining at home," interrupted the teacher, "then the professional tiller of the soil, the peasant, must be the most civilised man of all!"

"What if he were! What if country life, surrounded by all that man actually needs, without spoiling or weakening him, were really a higher civilisation! Higher indeed than the life in factories, with its social poverty and discontent; or than that of the merchant, who restlessly carries the world's goods from land to land, in order that the kingdoms of all nations may overflow with his products, at the expense of the majority of mankind who must suffer want and perish!"

The teacher looked at me with a startled expression.

"And therefore," I continued, "I cannot understand why in our day civilised man should leave the soil, and does leave it! Nor how a village schoolmaster can be capable of lending a hand to further it! No, the teacher of the peasants should daily pray aloud before the children a paternoster and a prayer for the harvests."

To which he replied: "Are we teachers, then, for the sole purpose of making peasants? We teach the children to enable them, when grown, to go away from here."

"Go away! *Donnerwetter!* Where then? I almost believe, sir, that you wish to anger me with your jesting!"

"*Mein Gott*, no!" he cried, seizing me by the arm. "I am only amazed at *your* jesting."

And then in sudden irritation, he said: "To-day is not the first time it has occurred to me that the farmhand from Adamshaus talks like a professor. What does it mean? It looks quite suspicious. We shall be obliged to inquire after your certificate of naturalisation. If there is anything here you wanted to ferret out——"

"So you think I may be a spy?" I asked.

"Upon my honour, yes! You are not a peasant born, even though you do set him on such a high pinnacle. No, no, Hans, you may say what you will."

"Really!"

"You can no longer deceive me. You do not belong in Almgai, and you have your special reasons for remaining here."

"And supposing I have!"

"Shall I tell you why you search the papers so diligently? You are looking for your warrant of arrest!"

"There now, schoolmaster, that is rather strong language! Why do you not try to earn the reward at once by making the arrest?"

My indifferent manner perplexed him still more. Then changing his tone, he said: "Of course I don't mean exactly that; a villain would hardly choose months of hard labour on a peasant's farm.

Yet, I should like to know what it all means." He stopped in the middle of the road, and seizing the lapels of my coat with both hands, he asked: "Now tell me frankly, Hans Trautendorffer, what are you after up there? You are a city gentleman in disguise, and you have your own reasons for staying at Adamshaus. Allow me to ask, what are you after up there?"

His red face had grown still more flushed; swollen rings had formed about his eyes, which protruded most curiously. His extraordinary vehemence excited my wrath and I remained silent.

"Will you tell me?" he asked.

Why not? Why should I not confide in him, after all? Was it anything disgraceful? And was I not forced to save myself from false suspicion? But no, questions asked in such a manner will not be answered by any Hans Trautendorffer.

"You will not tell me what is keeping you up there?" he at last asked, threateningly.

"Certainly not."

"Very good, then I will tell you."

"Well?"

"The girl pleases you!"

"The girl! Me!"—a theatrical pause followed.

"You want the girl!!"

"*Mein Gott*, schoolmaster, why should I not want the girl? And what is that to you?"

"What is that to me, my dear Trautendorffer? I will tell you. It is very much to me. The girl is mine!"

And now, philosopher, practise patience for a week. Continued in our next.

Twentieth Sunday.

Last Sunday thou leftest me standing in a remote Alpine valley, in the company of a jealous rival, and thy friend still lives. Since then he has been obliged to hoe corn and plant potatoes for an entire week.

It needed only a little more to make me realise that I was in love with this shy little maid, and I did not conceal the fact from the schoolmaster for an instant. It is true, I only love her as one might love the Sistine Madonna. There is no need for thee to worry about the love which one bears the saints! Fortunately, excepting the few odious ones that may still be in store for me, my most dangerous years are over. And not the slightest harm was done as the foolish man stood before me, crying: "The girl is mine!"

Henceforth the affair assumed a different aspect and many things became clear to me. What is more natural than that the teacher also should be fluttering around this light? A storm will fan even the most modest little flame into a conflagration. So this ice-cold maiden, as far back as a year ago, has allowed him to kiss her eyes!

At his outcry on that walk, I stopped still. He also stopped and seemed surprised that I did not collapse. But remaining on my feet, I said: "The devil, schoolmaster! you show good taste! Allow

me to congratulate you. I wish to add, however, that if you fail to make the girl happy, I will stone you on the square before the church in Hoisendorf."

"Very well," he replied, resuming his good-natured tone; "if I fail to make her happy, you may study the methods of Nero, Diocletian, Ivan the Terrible, and all the inquisitors, to find the most effective way of torturing me to death."

"Agreed," I said. "And now do you not think that things should be a little different between us? In exchange for your frankness, I should like to give you my confidence. Your suspicions concerning me prove that it is quite time for me to explain myself to you. Shall we go farther up the valley? Or perhaps you had better lean against this maple-tree, schoolmaster, for you might faint when you hear my story. A twenty-five year old trump like yourself, when deeply enamoured, is capable of imagining God only knows what kind of romantic things. That is nothing unusual. There are others who would do the same. Behold before you a journalist, who has turned farmhand—a genuine, brawny, peasant farmhand!"

Here followed the history of Hans von Trautendorffer, whose ancestors, at the time of the Hohenstauffen, imposed such exorbitant customs' duties on travellers. After this came the story of the orphan boy who was only fit to work at the village blacksmith's, and how, later, the blacksmith's apprentice developed into a good-for-nothing youth, out of whom the baker-uncle wished to make a

great scholar, but a soldier was evolved instead, apparently destined to wear the field-marshal's hat. During all these transformations the young man succeeded in losing his way with the greatest dexterity until finally he entered the guild of journalists. I elaborated upon this period of my career and showed how a twofold being had dwelt in me, whose inclinations did not in the least harmonise with my calling, and how an old-fashioned view of life was constantly at war with the journalism of a modern city. I concluded by telling the story of the wager, and how the peasant got the better of the scribbler; also how, when it came to be a matter of defending his honour, he had agreed to serve for one year as knight of the pitchfork.

The teacher listened with genuine astonishment. When I had finished, he walked a few steps out on the meadow, then returning, said: "This story you have just told me, Hans, is probably between ourselves?"

"As you wish, Herr Winter. The days of intolerance are over. I intended to give you my sincere confidence. I cannot do more."

Then shaking his head dubiously for a while, he said that everything seemed to agree with that which I had told him and he offered me his hand. In the meantime we had gone far into the wilderness, along by cliffs, at the foot of which turbid streams of *débris* were emptying into the water that gushes forth here from under the mountain. This is the source of the river Rechen. My heart was

lightened by the thought that now I might honestly stand, undisguised, before at least one man. The teacher, however, had grown very silent.

"What a curious river this is!" he muttered at length, looking at the water.

"It is beautiful and clear," I added.

"Strange, how it always runs out from the mountain in this way! Forever and ever!"

"Forever and ever!" I repeated after him. Our mood had grown quite romantic.

"Have you confided your secret to no one else here?" asked the teacher.

"You are my oldest acquaintance in Hoisendorf and—I might say—my youngest friend."

"We really ought to address each other as 'thou,'" he suggested.

"Well, then, Good day to thee."

"For thou sayest 'thou' to her. Of course that cannot be avoided, since it is the custom among peasants. But I have nearly gone mad about it, I will confess it frankly."

"Henceforth, brother, thou wilt be less foolish, I trust. Promise me that. Otherwise it would be too absurd. If thou wilt not trust me, because, being a man, thou art acquainted with the weaknesses of thy sex, then look at her. Thou must know better than anyone how much she loves thee."

"I have proofs of it," he murmured, gazing out over the mountains.

We had turned about and were walking across the meadows, where the sun was again shining.

"It must have been hard for thee to keep thy secret," said the teacher, after a pause; "but thou seest, I fare little better."

"I understand — but, Guido, it strikes me that thou, too, hast a story."

"Mine will not be so easy to tell," he replied. "And yet it is all so probable, so devilishly probable, that in most cases people would begin to believe it before it was told."

That was his introduction. It required a few leading questions on my part to throw light on the dark places. No doubt thou art flattering thyself, philosopher, that thou already understandest. But it is not so simple as thou dost imagine. Listen, then, to the history of Guido Winter, schoolmaster in Hoisendorf. He is also a city-bred man, who has come to the mountains to earn his bread in a calling at present very common.

The first part of the narrative is quite an ordinary one. Descended from the middle class, son of a rope-maker in Lausach, he with difficulty carried his studies nearly to the point of a Doctorate of Law. But this rope-maker's son was an obstinate youth, who, although willing to submit to his superiors, refused to be ruled by his fellow-students. And this man, ill bred and diseased by poverty of ideas, had the audacity to make the following speech at a student's *Kommers:* "Fellow-students! I am exceedingly fond of you all, but as far as your drinking and duelling regulations are concerned they are nothing but student's philistinisms. Not

even an ox would allow himself to be forced to drink, and only those fight who wish to fight. But I am not to be forced, do you hear? My face is already disfigured with smallpox, yet it is too good to be marred by the first pugnacious fool who happens along. I have the courage to say that I have no scars!"

This courage to say that he had no scars, was indeed more dangerous than a few duels would have been. It was fatal, and the students naturally expelled him from their clubs. This ostracised him from the good society of the little university town, where, by tutoring the stupid sons of the rich families, he had earned a bare living. He was obliged to abandon his university course and seek a means of livelihood elsewhere. Fortunately for him, there were positions to be had in the common schools in the country, one of which, far back in Almgai, was assigned to him temporarily. Salary, three hundred *Gulden* and perquisites. That was indeed good luck! And there was a collection of books thrown in. Yet he would have felt quite lost in the solitudes of the mountains, had he not had one thing in his possession—youth.

At first all went very well; but the longer he remained in Hoisendorf, the stranger he felt there. The city-bred youth lacked a real inclination to teach, and he also lacked a comprehension for nature. His sympathy for the people did not extend beyond one—the sweetest peasant maid in all the world. When he arrived in Hoisendorf she was still

in school and had neatly written in her reading-book the name: Barbara Weiler. His first thought when he saw her was: "She is a dear little fool!" But later—when, with her serious eyes she drank in the confidential words of the teacher, or when she heartily laughed at him for his clumsy methods of housekeeping, or deftly performed some household service for him, or borrowed a book—then he found more fitting epithets to apply to her. When she left school, he advised her to practise her reading and writing industriously. So she often read a little in his Peter Hebel or his Schiller, always returning the books by her brother, Franzel, with a cordial note of thanks. I wonder if, after all, the notes of thanks may not have been the chief reason for lending the books! Thus things went on quietly and innocently—then all at once it happened. The first revelation was a noticeable embarrassment. On Sundays, when they met and bowed to each other, she would blush, and he would stumble when walking on level ground. Thou seest, I am describing something to thee which is the same old story since the time of Adam and Eve. But it is remarkably curious, how they chanced to meet one day in May by the churchyard wall, directly under a blossoming elder-bush, and how he nearly devoured her eyes in one long kiss. However, the stupid youth was severely punished for this misdemeanour. Thenceforth she avoided him, as a singed cat avoids the fire, and he could find nothing to assuage the conflagration in his own breast. During the entire

summer, according to his account, he had naught but an ungovernable heart and an empty brain to comfort him.

One day, early in the winter, as he returned home from a teacher's convention in Kailing, he found a fire lighted in his room, which was filled with women, and Barbel was lying on his bed;—Barbel, shivering and laughing! On her way to the shopkeeper's the girl had slipped on the icy bridge and fallen into the river; and she was barely rescued by a woodsman and carried into the schoolhouse, which happened to be near by.

Adam came for Barbel on the same day. Wrapped in a half-dozen blankets, she was laid on the sledge, which was drawn up the mountain by a pair of oxen. But it was too late; the schoolmaster had completely lost his head. A few days afterwards he ascended the mountain and in the natural course of events, arrived at Adamshaus. He longed to rest, yet he was not weary. He longed to warm himself, yet he was not cold. Then he thought: "It is quite proper for me to ask her parents how she is, and if she has entirely recovered."

Her parents were not at home, but out in the barn cutting feed. In the house at the spinning-wheel sat the girl. She was alone—entirely alone in the room. At first he said nothing; then, rushing towards her, he cried: "I love thee! I love thee!"

From that hour they could no longer resist each other. Thus far, my friend, he told me his story. Towards the close he seemed to be groping

uncertainly, to see how much he could refrain from telling or how plainly he must speak in order to be understood. Thou canst imagine my feelings at this confession of the schoolmaster!

We then chatted a while longer. On asking him his plans, he said that he did not intend to go away, but would remain in Hoisendorf, although he failed to comprehend how anyone else, less deeply implicated than himself, could endure it. It was indeed a dreary corner of the world. For that reason he wished a happy escape for little Franzel.

By the time our significant conversation was at an end, shadows were on the mountain. Only the wooden walls of Adamshaus still gleamed in the light of the setting sun, and the windows sparkled as if the interior of the house were filled with flame.

By the grove of ash-trees we separated—the teacher going valleywards, I up the mountain. He stopped on the bridge and looked back after me. I believe he does not quite trust me yet. I did not remain alone on my walk. I was soon joined by the hunter, Konrad. To-day he carried his gun and wore a feather in his hat, as usual. He requested me to walk more slowly as he wished for company.

I should have liked better to be alone. There is not much to talk about with hunters. On this occasion, however, it proved to be otherwise. Konrad, to my surprise, did not converse about deer, rabbits, and dogs, but about people. And of no other than of our Rocherl. He said that his life

had become a torment to him on account of the lad's misfortune. He had already tried to press smart money upon Rocherl, but he would accept nothing. If he, Konrad, could have his own hand cut off and give it in exchange for the wounded one, he would do it, and God was his witness. Whenever he caught sight of the cripple, he felt like doing something to himself. He seemed to be in a terrible state of mind over it.

"That comes from your cursed shooting!" I retorted. "Is it then always necessary to shoot? And even if a hungry fool should happen to get a bit of game, where is the harm? Oh no, hunter; in this matter my conscience is very elastic. It is very elastic against people who are able to spend a good income every year on hunting sports. To imprison poor people or to allow them to be crippled for life by shooting them down because they sometimes want a bit of roast meat, that—as I am a gentleman —I frankly acknowledge I consider too paltry!"

There was no contradicting me, answered Konrad, yet the hunters had their regulations. He was only a hireling; that he knew very well. No matter how lordly a manner he might assume before peasants and poor people, before his superiors he would bend like the tire of a wheel and would swallow crusts that no dog would eat. And he, for his part, was tired of it. The most annoying feature of it all was that he had heard that Kulmbock intended to bring up the affair in the *Landtag*.

Now I discovered for the first time why the man

was so humble. He was afraid of the *Landtag*, and his masters would not be especially gratified about it either. He was willing to settle the affair secretly, but he dreaded an open scandal. That, of course, is why he was so anxious to recompense Rocherl. It would be a good thing if the new deputy to the *Landtag* should disclose all the rascality of this kind which goes on in the forest. With these comforting words I left the hunter.

To-day I was to be continually disappointed in my wish to be alone in the solitudes of these mountains. As I ascended the path towards our farm, I found on the *Brunnenwiese*—here every bit of land has its special name—the housefather. He was sitting on a damp pile of grass breathing heavily. Because the cow in the stable would refuse to give milk in the evening unless she had some fresh feed, the old man had taken the scythe and gone down to mow the grass. During his task he had been seized with one of his attacks.

"Why dost thou do this, father, when thou hast a man?" I said. "Thou shouldst have had me do it this morning."

He replied in a breathless voice: "God bless thee, Hansel. Sunday belongs to thee."

When the feed had been placed in the cow's manger, I went to my haymow, to reflect once more upon the stupid world outside, where the people are wantonly passing their time and strength in fencing-matches, duelling, racing, betting, and hunting, and in supporting an army of half a million idle

soldiers, while here, my Adam, even on Sundays, is obliged to bend under the burden of work.

Philosopher, thou mightest incidentally ask one of thy world-wise friends how long this state of affairs is to last.

As far as I am concerned, they may care for each other, those two. It is all folly, folly! What a stupid world!

Twenty-first Sunday.

This week there has been a revolution in Adamshaus. The shoemakers have been here—three of them: the master with a bald head, the assistant with jet-black hair and the apprentice with a bare, red scalp. From the hides which Adam had removed from the cows and pigs and which a neighbour had tanned, they were to make shoes for us to last an entire year. In the spring, my housefather says, these gentlemen of the shoemaker's trade are least presumptuous, for then they have less work in Almgai, and the leather is not always too dry for them, or the thread too rotten, or the oil too rancid, or the food too poor. And yet they ruled the house. They moved the large table up to the hearth; the wardrobe they shoved over by the sink. In the space thus left free they now seated themselves, each one on a three-legged stool. The master, with the bald head, cuts out the leather on a lap-board. The assistant, with the black hair, reels the thread over his bare elbow and outspread fingers, then hangs it on a hook in the wall in order to stretch the skein

across the whole width of the room. And when he draws his cobbler's wax over the tightly held threads, the squeaking sound is heard throughout the entire house. The wornout shoes are softened in great tubs of water, and the odour of leather, pitch and shoe-making is everywhere.

The apprentice with the red scalp I am already acquainted with. He always avoids looking at me, for he doubtless remembers a certain service which I performed for his benefit on holy Easter night. He is one of those who seems to profit by his beatings. Since his hair was singed off, his master can no longer pull it. Now he would like to be addressed as the young shoemaker, but our Rocherl always calls him Saufüssel, as it is written in his baptismal certificate. At present he is able to expend some of his irascibility upon the old rusty shoes. He tears them in pieces with a pair of forceps, that the bits of leather which are still good may be used about the new shoes.

That was the first day of the shoemakers' reign. On the second day, with shirt-sleeves rolled up, their arms were already moving rapidly from right to left. The thread as it passed through the leather squeaked like a man with hiccoughs, while the shoemakers swore like a hussar in love. These shoemakers are still unpractical; they do not yet peg the shoes, they sew them.

At the request of the shoemakers, who also work evenings until ten o'clock, we have acquired a new light. The tapers were too smoky for them, the

rape-seed oil lamp too dull, and the tallow candle insufficient for six eyes, that were obliged to find the holes in the leather with a needle made from a pig's bristle. No matter how carefully these holes had been bored with the awl, the bristle jerked hither and thither and failed to find them, and this it was that caused the defects. The shoemakers began to swear and demanded petroleum lamps, such as the peasant Nansen and the innkeeper in Hoisendorf had. Then Adam brought in two glass globes—I think they were filled with water—and hung them up on either side of the candle, the reflection doubling the light. The shoemakers grew very merry over this and told fabulous tales of the electric lights in the cities. The housemother interrupted them, saying: "With us on the farm it is the custom to go to bed and to rise early; thus we save the costly things, and the sunshine, which God gives us for nothing, helps us out."

Now we each receive our shoes; the men's are coarsely sewed, the women's more carefully made. The former are stitched on the outside, the latter with a turned seam, especially those for Sunday wear. Rocherl also wished a pair of the better-made shoes, but Adam said: "Art thou not ashamed of thyself?" I, too, was measured for a pair of the coarse shoes. As the shoemaker took the measure with a strip of paper, he remarked: "That is no peasant's foot."

At table during this glorious cobbler's week, everything swam in fat: the cabbage, the dump-

lings, the stew, the soup, the meat, and also the unctuous talk of the master shoemaker. Once the conversation turned to our neighbour, Kulmbock.

"The new deputy, the devil take him! He 'll make a success! He 'll take the bull by the horns! He 'll bell the cat, he will! The deputies must be forced to give in for a whole year, or we shall call in the police! The peasant shall do as he likes with his oxen and his children; send them to school or keep them home at work. The peasant's land shall not be divided and sold, like old shirts from which shoe rags are made. A peasant farm-owner who is married shall be exempt from military service, because he has his own wars to wage at home. Hunting shall be abolished, for it is unjust that the industrious peasant should be obliged to gnaw on cabbage stumps, because the rabbit has eaten the cabbage and the gentlemen have eaten the rabbit. The peasant's taxes shall be lightened and the aristocracy should only be too glad if the farmer produces anything for them to eat. The taxes of the aristocracy shall be raised, since they consider themselves so superior to other people."

This is Kulmbock's programme, which the shoemaker repeated to us, laughing aloud at every period. And then he continued: "Of course, what more natural! Everyone makes promises until he is elected and takes his seat. Afterwards he does nothing but sit still and be paid for sitting on a leather cushion. *Donnerwetter!* Kulmbock will

make things no better than the black stains on my finger-nails!"

"We must not expect too much," was my retort.

"Kulmbock is all right," interrupted the housemother, "if it is true that he is going to bring up the case of the hunter, Konrad, who wounded Rocherl's hand."

The housefather made a slight gesture of impatience: "What good will that do?"

The apprentice had hitherto done nothing but eat, but now that he was satisfied, the *Zeitgeist* moved him to speak also.

"And what then shall be done for the apprentice?" he screamed.

His question failing to be heard, he repeated:

"Is the apprentice to have nothing done for him?"

The master nodded significantly towards the lad: "Just wait a moment, and something will be done for thee!"

Saufüssel ducked behind the assistant and stuck out his tongue.

Such, my dear philosopher, is the agitation in the midst of which we live.

One evening, as we were all sitting together in the house, a stranger called. He pretended to be an expert locksmith. The housefather was of the opinion that locksmiths were somewhat superfluous in his house. There were three shoemakers and the two old paupers there already, and he did not know where the traveller could sleep.

"In a year from now we shall all be sleeping in silken beds," said the stranger, "so for this once I will put up with the straw. For my supper, I should be satisfied with a well-cooked roast of pork, if there is nothing better to be had."

"Very kind of the gentleman," jeered my housefather.

"Yes, my dear peasant," said the stranger, "we shall soon whistle a different tune. As it says in the Bible: 'The first shall be the last and the last first.'"

Here old Michel, who was sipping his evening porridge in the chimney-corner, pricked up his ears. Holding the dish in his trembling hands, he strained forward to listen and then asked his wife: "What is he saying?"

"He is one of those men," she screamed in his ear, "just wait a bit. He 's one of those men!"

The housemother, not without some malice, said to the stranger: "Perhaps the gentleman might find some work over at our neighbour Kulmbock's." He, she thought, would put him upon trial.

"I said nothing about work," answered the locksmith in a sharp voice, stroking his black moustache with his slender hand. "I am here from quite a different motive. I have been since yesterday coming up from Kailing. And there everybody is going to join, both the mechanics and the peasants. The citizens will soon follow, but in the meantime things are a bit uncomfortable for them, I believe."

"What is it all about, then?" asked the shoe-

maker, lighting his pipe preparatory to an hour of conversation.

"What is it about?" laughed the stranger. "We shall have to remove the night-caps from the heads of you Almgaiers. What is it about? he asks! Why, Nans, down there in Hoisendorf, he did not have to ask long; he understood at once that there was no other way to help ourselves than this. We should all of us, I say,—the labourers, the trades-people, the peasants,—we should all stand together."

"I believe that he is one of those men," said Rocherl significantly.

"Most assuredly, young man and owner of great estates!" cried the stranger jeeringly. "You peasants will benefit by it, too, when we have cleared the old rubbish away. Just see that ancient couple there in the chimney-corner, who have toiled and moiled all their days like cattle, and now go begging, while others fatten themselves upon the sweat of the peasant."

"What is he saying?" the pauper asked his wife.

"He is speaking the truth!" hissed the woman, clenching her bony fists in a most extraordinary way.

The stranger continued, addressing Rocherl: "I hear that you have had an accident happen to your hand. This misfortune was caused by the aristocrats, do you understand? But we will change things. I have documents with me. They make very good reading."

Unpacking some pamphlets, he began to dis-

tribute them, laying them on the table before those of the company who refused to take them in their hands.

"We have enough to read already," said the housefather, taking down a volume of sermons from the shelf and throwing it rather violently on the table.

"That is just what is keeping the masses so ignorant!" retorted the stranger. "If all such books had been burned a little sooner, the people would not have been burned themselves, I would have you know! Times are changed, and the spit is now to be turned on the other side. But we must hold together! Then we shall be the stronger and shall be able to accomplish that which we desire. When the great wealth, earned by the working people, is divided, there will no longer be any poor. You will find it all in these pamphlets. But we must have solidarity!"

"My opinion is," cried the shoemaker, "that as long as we have the soldiery things will be no better!"

"I did not say soldiery, you blockhead! I said solidarity, which is the same as community. One for all and all for one, when it comes to putting down the aristocracy!"

"What did he say?" asked the old pauper by the fire, growing more and more excited.

"Canst thou not hear? Canst thou not hear?" replied the old woman, her eyes glittering like those of a vulture.

"The labourers are about to enter a golden age!" continued the locksmith.

"Bravo!" cried the shoemaker.

"Employers and employees shall be equal!"

"Bravo!" screamed the shoemaker's assistant.

"And the apprentice shall be equal to the employee!"

"Bravo!" shouted Saufüssel.

The word was scarcely out of his mouth when he received a resounding whack from his master's strap.

"Has the fight begun already? Already?" cried the old pauper, Michel, hastily staggering from the chimney-corner.

"I 'll do my part!" shrieked Michelin, snapping her fingers in the air and rushing wildly about the room.

"*Herrgott!* Get up, we are going to begin!" said the old man joyfully.

"Strike, strike!" they screamed, and both flew around the room in such a ghastly fashion that we all asked each other: "What ails the old couple?" When they finally perceived that the blows were not meant for the aristocrats or the rich peasants, but merely for the shoemaker's apprentice, they slunk back like somnambulists suddenly awakened, and stammering a few confused words they subsided once more into their chimney-corner.

Friend, it was uncanny to see how the brute suddenly came to life in this ancient couple, usually so resigned and cringingly humble. It made cold shivers run up and down my spine.

The locksmith watched the outbreak with marked pleasure. "Bravo! Everything is afire, youth and old age!" This was his introduction, but he was interrupted. The housefather had for some time been kneeling before the table, his thumb on his forehead ready to make the sign of the cross and to read the psalter as soon as a pause in the tumult should occur. Now, as the locksmith recommenced his talk, he began with a will. The shoemakers joined in the prayers, while still continuing their work, sewing, hammering the soles, or stretching the leather across the lasts. The locksmith was at a loss to know what to think about it. To this castle he had no key. While the evening glow was shining in through the windows—here he was, with his plans for overturning the world, among worshippers! He could not decide whether to kneel down, to take his seat, or to go away, so he remained standing in the middle of the room as if rooted to the spot.

Suddenly the housefather stopped praying, and the rest of us started up in astonishment. He rose, walked over to the locksmith, and said, not loudly but distinctly: "He who enters the house of a stranger must follow the customs of the household. If the gentleman will not join in the worship then he must go away."

As the man was in sore need of a place to sleep and a breakfast the following morning, he submitted. After the evening devotions were over, the master shoemaker retired to his bed in the attic;

assistant and apprentice, only half undressed, lay down on the straw which the housemother had spread on the floor between the table and the working bench. Father and mother went to their room, and Rocherl to his, which at this season of the year is over the cellar. Barbel, after dipping her fingers into the vase of holy water, quickly and gravely entered her chamber. The eyes of the locksmith followed her. The couple, the Michelmensch, slipped away to their stable bedroom and I started for my haymow.

I stopped in the middle of the yard and waited for the locksmith to come out of the house. As he did not appear, I re-entered. All was dark and he was standing before Barbel's door. What was he doing there? I asked.

Oh, he was only studying the lock, he said; it was an old and very interesting iron lock, the like of which one seldom found nowadays.

"We will look at that to-morrow, when it is light," I replied, escorting him to his bed of straw on the barn floor. Here we had a few words together. I showed him what a foolish figure he had cut in the peasant's house with his new teachings. Fortunately, the family had not taken him seriously, for had they done so, he would now be suffering from a lame back. He must be a tremendous simpleton to interpret Social Democracy in this manner on his own account. Did he not know, then, that it was long since anyone had advocated such principles as he held forth?

To this he boldly remarked, that even if one did not believe these things oneself, it was necessary to talk thus to simple people, in order to gain an influence over them. They were always ready to swallow the bait when it was a question of equality.

To this I replied: "Do not bring disgrace upon the Social Democrats; they are an honourable party; they demand their lawful rights and, I think, desire to perform their duty conscientiously. But you belong in the penitentiary." And with these words I left him standing beside his bed of straw.

Late that same evening I overheard the old pauper say to his wife: "We are too old to accomplish anything. When we rebel, everybody laughs."

"Just wait a bit, Michel, till our Hieserl comes; he will be strong."

Hieserl, whose bones were discovered so many years ago!

Not only have the people gone mad, but the times are out of joint, and, what is more, the weather also. In the middle of May we are having snow-flurries as if it were January; cherry-blossoms and snow-flakes together. The little shed opposite the house has a thatched roof and Adam has suggested that we take down the roof and feed the cattle with the straw. For we have no more grain in the barn and the snow lies so deep on the meadow that even the fence-posts are nearly buried.

We have remained in the house discussing politics. My Adam can do this as well as any pot-house politician. The Greco-Turkish war, of which one hears

so much at present, seems rather to tickle his fancy.

"That is clever," he says, "to pay back the Turks for their cruelties many years ago, when they burned our houses and took our people prisoners."

From the parish of Hoisendorf alone, the Turks are said to have carried off sixty-three men and women as prisoners. When we learned later that the intriguing Greeks had met with reverses, Adam was pleased with this also: "The one who begins deserves to be soundly whipped."

Which bit of sarcasm was designed for a wood-cutter who happened to be present, whose name is "Toifel." From Rudolf, Tolfel had first been evolved, and, from this, Toifel. He was a coarse, irascible man, who, wherever he found a few men assembled, always started a fight. Taking the remark of the housefather to himself, he sprang to his feet like a tiger and asked Adam if that were any concern of his, for if Adam Weiler wished to fight, he needed only to say so! As there was more than one cripple in the neighbourhood who had offended this man once too often, I decided to play the rôle of diplomat.

"I would n't do that if I were in your place, wood-cutter," I said. "If you should lose your great reputation by fighting this sickly man, it would ruin you. If you have the pluck, I know of another opponent out in the stall-chamber, and he is a double one, too. You cannot tame him. He is longing to fight the aristocrats. The wood-cutter,

Toifel, is, I think, the only man who could measure himself against such a rival, unless he would prefer to wage war upon the aristocrats on his own account."

"The aristocrats are nothing to me!" he snarled spitefully, still ready to spring upon Adam; "and the man in the stall-chamber is nothing to me, either!"

"Indeed, he is nothing to you? When he has been boasting every day that the man who would be able to knock him down would have to get up earlier in the morning than Toifel?"

"What! Did he say that?" asked the wood-cutter, yielding. "Then I must look up this small boy."

To our great relief he left the house and we barred the door after him.

"*Mein Gott!*" wailed Barbel, "what if he should kill them!"

"He 'll not harm them," said Adam, for the two paupers had started an hour previous with neighbour Schlappzopf, who had come after them with a sledge.

So much for to-day concerning affairs in Adamshaus.

With loving remembrances,
Thy faithful farmhand.

Twenty-second Sunday.

My Herr Stein von Stein has written me another love-letter. Of course I am perfectly free — he

writes, overflowing with friendliness — to sacrifice my position and my future to a hobby, but he has the honour to inform me that from the first of next month my department on the paper will be filled; and that I shall have no opportunity of reconsidering the matter goes without saying.

Not one of my colleagues writes to me now, excepting Meyer, who, a few weeks ago, sent me a harrowing description of the editorial service during the war, and of the tricky amiability of the chief. I believe the fellows are intriguing against their worthy superior and laughing in their sleeves because the old skinflint is losing his wager. But I am a little worried sometimes about the three witnesses. What if the Lord should take Doctors Lobensteiner, Meyer, and Wegmacher to Himself! Doctor Wegmacher is always threatening to emigrate to America, because Meyer will not publish his humorous sketches, which is really a crime, for the sketches are good, according to their author, and he ought to know. Lobensteiner is said to be a silent partner in the firm. All these circumstances might prove fatal for me. In the meantime I will pretend to be dead and will not reply to my chief's letter.

That thou, dear friend and philosopher, hast absolutely refused to consider my proposal to spend thy holidays in Almgai, although a great disappointment to me, is perhaps after all a good thing. Thou art right; it would be a pity to disturb my fairy-tale mood in this earth kingdom, which is now so intoxicating. I might become disenchanted if a modern

city gentleman were to lie in the grass and, to the accompaniment of brilliant thoughts, watch his friend spread manure and hoe potatoes. Thou art perfectly right; this year in the earth kingdom must be lived and suffered in all the gravity of solitude. Is it refining? It may be so, for sometimes I feel as if the fires of purgatory were burning my poor soul. The hardships are often really bitter. Then, the misery of this household! It is true, they only half realise it; their secret sorrow strikes one all the more painfully, the more resignedly they bear it.

And, last of all, my homesickness for intellectual life! Although I say a hundred times to myself: There is nothing to it; it is only my heart that is desolate! Curse it! To be obliged to give up all intellectual life so absolutely—that pains and stupefies the heart. Thou wouldst call my present mode of existence "airing my dusty city soul," and I believe those are the right words for it. As long as I live, I shall be thankful to thee for thine encouragement during this period of transformation.

In my terrible loneliness I often have nothing with which to comfort myself but—pity. The more cheerful Adam's household, the more I pity them, and the more I pity the happier I am. At last I am beginning to suspect what sorrow means. It is the antidote to despair. Especially in my case. I had expected so much from the glories of this Alpine country, from the beauties of the landscape. But no; these only please when one is in harmony with them, when one's heart is light and one's mood is

happy. In themselves they do not suffice. And so there is nothing left but these poor people. Heaven must have been in a misanthropic frame of mind when it selected me as helper for Adamshaus. Me, of all men! Well, it may not have made a mistake after all.

To make a variety, we are occasionally subjected to slight hardships that, strictly speaking, are quite unnecessary; so they will not be rewarded by Providence. This letter, for instance, smells of turpentine. It happened in this wise: Last week we were "fencing," which means that we were mending the fences that separate the pastures from the fields and also mark the lines of the property. These last, I will say for thine instruction, are sometimes visited by ghosts of the dead owners, who wander restlessly up and down until the displaced boundary posts stand again where they rightfully belong. This was true, Adam tells me, in the case of the boundary-line of a neighbour, where every night for years the old dead Schlappzopf paced to and fro, moaning pitifully. Adam probably thought that the encroachment was to the disadvantage of his own boundary-line, but as he was not sure how great it was he had been unable to replace the post. However, one Whitsunday night, when Schlappzopf was wandering again, moaning as usual, Adam called out to the ghost: "Neighbour, in God's name, thou shalt be released and thy debt to me shall be cancelled, and the boundary-line left as it is, even though I make a present of it to thy neighbour!"

And then the ghost disappeared. But a few nights later another ghost appeared at Adam's bedside, that of his grandfather, who accused Adam of giving away something not belonging to him. Whereupon Adam reflected that one could indeed give away a calf or a waggon, but not a piece of land, which belongs to no one in particular, because it belongs to everybody—to the descendants as well as to the forefathers; in fact, to the entire race. After this Adam told his family that, being unable to come to terms with his neighbour in any other way, he had bought six feet and moved the boundary-line. Then peace was restored.

Here thou hast my typical Adam. First, he gives away his own land to release his old neighbour's soul from torment; afterwards, he buys it back again to give his grandfather peace. This story is an example of the tenacity of the peasant born. And among the peasants one can also learn something about ghosts.

Well, we have repaired the fences. The housefather drove the posts into the ground in pairs while I laid the sticks across them—young larch-trees, previously felled in the woods and stripped of their branches. These he bound with fresh pine shavings, which Rocherl had cut before a fire kindled in the open field, that they might acquire the necessary toughness. The *Einhandel* (one handed) is always glad to find some task to perform as if he were a whole man. He longs to be a whole man like the others, but his right hand is as useless as

dry wood, only it pains him like human flesh. And so the poor boy often bursts forth in a wail of despair, thereby sorely distressing us all.

In comparison to his trial, what is the little wound on my hand? Now I shall soon come to the turpentine. It was on the eve of Ascension Day, and at four o'clock in the afternoon, as we were busy with our fence-making, our housefather announced to us that our holiday had begun. "*In Gottes Namen lassen wir es gut sein!*" he said, which reminded me of the words in the Bible: "And he saw that it was good." But I saw on this particular Wednesday that it was not good. There was one part of the fence still unfinished, through which the neighbour's cows could easily enter our fine green field of oats, while we were sitting at church on Ascension Day. So I stayed behind alone to bar the opening temporarily with poles, and in doing this I thrust a sharp splinter into the ball of my right hand. Adam succeeded in removing a part of it with the blade of his pocket-knife, but the remaining bit pressed directly against a nerve and it pained me cruelly.

The housemother came with her shining black pitch-oil jug, made a plaster and laid it on my hand, saying: "That will draw out the splinter." For two nights I slept but little and in my distress I felt like arousing the entire household to send them for the doctor in Kailing, when finally the wound began to suppurate, which forced out the bit of wood. It was no longer than a thorn, and it makes one angry with the nerve for being so excited over such a trifle.

"The nerve is probably nervous," said Rocherl, who knows from his own experience. I am always delighted whenever he becomes witty; and now thou hast discovered why this paper smells of turpentine.

Day before yesterday my housefather set up a huge frame in the large living-room, and it made even more confusion than the shoemakers' apparatus. It was a structure composed of bars, beams, rollers, reels, and a variety of parts. For a long time I did not know what it all meant and this gentleman farmhand is usually too proud to ask questions. In the afternoon, when Adam was winding yarn on the rollers from spools and reels, it began to dawn upon me; and when the shuttle appeared in sight, whistling merrily through the threads at the rise and fall of the harnesses, even the author of articles on political economy could no longer remain in doubt that it was a loom.

As we may boldly assert that the common wooden wheels used for the transportation of loads in primitive times were a greater discovery than the locomotive, and that the simple spinning-wheel of the cottager overshadows in importance the most ingenious spinning mills in the world, so we may also say, that the old-fashioned loom of the peasant, in its unpretentiousness combining the simplest methods with the greatest expediency, is still more remarkable than all the clever machinery of a modern cloth manufactory, which is really the result of the peasant's loom. A single man, with two feet to do the

treading, two arms to move quickly, and a clever head, produces from the loose threads the beautiful, smooth linen. Especially the clever head!

It would be highly instructive for city people now and then to investigate the versatility of the "stupid peasants." Besides carrying on a complicated farm, which here consists of cultivating the land, raising stock, and cutting wood, the peasant is able not only to grind grain, press oil from flaxseed, build houses, brew turpentine, make cider, distil brandy, but also to spin yarn, weave linen and wool, full loden-cloth, tan leather—in short, make everything required by a household obliged to supply itself.

It was a pleasure to watch Adam and to see how skilfully he worked the loom. One has to understand the intricacies of the yarn, however. I tried to help a little and I immediately became entangled. I endeavoured to free myself, turning in all directions, wriggling and whirling, always getting deeper in, until at last even the housemother was unable to extricate me. But then she scolded too constantly and became too impatient, which the yarn is least of all able to endure. Every movement to escape from the hundredfold threads and meshes only made the confusion worse. So finally Barbel had to be called to release the entrapped bumble-bee from the spider's web. As the girl entered the room, I felt exactly as if the spider were coming to see what kind of booty it had caught this time. While, with the greatest composure and with delicate touch, she was unwinding the threads from my arms and legs

and loosening the noose from about my breast and throat, my entanglement was complete. . . .

If the schoolmaster should hear of it! I imagine the linen which Adam is weaving will be used for the wedding outfit. And the farmhand from distant parts is already ensnared! What folly! The girl is as innocent as a snow-bell. It is I who have ensnared myself—with my absurd fancies.

We of the "higher civilisation" know nothing about love. We are only able to flirt and dilly-dally and sin and be jealous. But love! As Leander loved Hero, as Romeo loved Juliet! We are much too well brought up for that. Or too poorly nourished. What dost thou think, philosopher?

This afternoon the Michelmensch have been here again. This pair I know are capable of loving, since that day when I saw how their hatred flared up to the very roof. They, together with their big basket, were called for so suddenly a few days ago by the neighbour with his team, that they had no time to say good-bye to Adam's household. So the old paupers returned to express their thanks for the "good weeks" under this roof. The wife, of course, was spokesman, and she seemed so sincere, so grateful and tender,—saying how they had both prayed that our dear Lady, the Mother of God, might spread her protecting mantle over this loyal home and its pious inmates. And if Michel and Michelin, as was probably certain, should be obliged to take their departure from this world earlier than Adam's household, they would reserve a good place

with the Lord God in the bright heaven above for father Adam, for mother Traudel, and for their children four.

Could these really be the same old people who during the visit of the crazy, red-haired man had fallen into such a rage? Or was this humble thankfulness for charity received nothing but hypocrisy? I think they are only two children, who, on occasion, can become very obdurate. Or is perhaps a drop of wild, revolutionary blood still remaining in this God-fearing, old-fashioned country folk?

They were already crossing the doorsill, their sticks clattering, when the old woman turned once more towards the hearth and said to the housemother: "If by any chance Hieserl should come and ask after us, thou wouldst tell him where we are, wouldst thou not, mother? We are staying with Schlappzopf now, and next week we shall be at Gleimer's, then at Kulmbock's, and so on, south."

The light of their old age is their son! O friend, what will faith not do for one!

Good-night to thee, Alfred, out in the wide world. I should like thee to play one of Paul Gerhard's hymns for me, I am in such a tender-hearted mood. A beautiful custom prevails in this house, which I have not yet observed in other peasant homes in this region. In the evening, when the family separate, the parents and children, brothers and sister shake hands with each other, saying: "*Behüt dich Gott über Nacht!*" ("God keep thee over night!") They say it as earnestly as if they

were taking leave of one another before some impending danger. And this has called to my mind the meaning of night. "It is the friend of no man!" And also the meaning of sleep. "It is the brother of death!" Man lays himself down as if upon a bier and trusts to the beating of his heart to keep his body warm. Soon everything that has been his life and his activity ceases. It is as much at an end as if it had never been. It is as much at an end as if it were never to begin again. And if it should not begin again, then there will be no pain, no mourning in the everlasting sleep. And if it begins again, it is like a new creation, a new birth, and a divine miracle. Everything which has ceased for the slumberer, noiselessly and painlessly, is again in existence, even as our beloved dead will one day rise from the earth and say to us: "Good morning!"

Friend Alfred, may our resurrection be like that! *Behüt dich Gott über Nacht!*

Twenty-third Sunday.

"*Pfingsten, das liebliche Fest ist gekommen!*" ("'T is Pentecost, the Feast of Gladness.") However trite this quotation may be, I never realised its simple beauty until now. If a rough farmhand were allowed to weep, I should do so with pleasure. When a common peasant sobs for joy over flowers, sunshine, and the song of birds — is that not folk-sentiment enough for thee?

It is quite impossible to describe to thee, my friend, how beautiful this mountain world now is.

With every breath of soft wind a shower of snowy petals from the cherry-trees is scattered over the stable roof, and the upland meadows are white to the edge of the woods with daisies. I am surrounded by flowers and the brightness of spring, and I often long to cry out: Lord, I am not worthy! To think of allowing myself to be paid for such a heaven as this! I am deeply ashamed of my wager.

And yet these flowers do not seem to suffice for this maiden. She lingers in her garden near the house, supporting her hand on one knee, while with the other she kneels on the dark earth. Looking herself like a rose-bush, she plants young gilliflowers and the shimmering, silvery rosemary. The latter she will need on Corpus Christi Day and so her mother has given it to her to raise. Now and then she wipes the sweat from her brow with her little white handkerchief. Is it then already so warm?

On this Whitsunday morning I rose early and walked out through the wet grass. The dandelions and the tall stems of the bluebells sprinked my limbs with dewdrops. I climbed the Kulmplatte, where, seven weeks ago, the Easter fire was lighted, and stood gazing about me. This wonderful primeval mountain country! I worshipped it as if kneeling before a pentecostal altar. The only peak visible in our Hoisendorf valley is the towering, perpendicular Rechenstein, but the sound of bells reached my ear, to remind me that yonder stands a church for those who only recognise God when He is small and dwells in a building made with hands.

It is true, one should not seek for God in endless space, but rather in one's own heart, and so it may be that within the narrow confines of four stone walls some find the way to their hearts sooner than under the open sky. *Du lieber Gott!* My inner life is not alone in my heart and brain, but it is everywhere where my thoughts can reach, in everything that my ear can hear and my eye can see and my mind can grasp. Everything that I know is a part of myself, is my ego.

As these thoughts surged through my brain on this morning, I suddenly shouted in triumph: "Mankind, world, thou art indeed redeemed! Mankind, thou art the universe! Universe, thou art mankind! Thou art one and the same, thou art eternal and thy spirit is called God! There shall be no more sorrow, no incompleteness; and let him who is burdened by his mortal fetters, cast them aside and gird himself about with the circle of the sun!"

I have frequently had the feeling, my dear Alfred, that the mood of highest ecstasy might become dangerous—that is, according to man's idea of danger. This Whitsunday morning on the Kulmplatte, it came over me for a moment: If there were a precipice here, I should feel impelled to fly into the zodiac. But the farmhand held back the "universe man," saying: "What art thou thinking of? Shall Adam, with his weak lungs, plough all alone this week?"

And for the time being my spiritual body, from which I cannot entirely escape, remained hovering

in the vault of heaven, while I gazed at it with the two eyes of Hans Trautendorffer.

Hast thou ever noticed how the tourist, when he climbs a high mountain, involuntarily looks first towards the west? Is it the magnetism of the sun, which invariably draws humanity from east to west? Next my eyes wandered to the distant rocky chain with their glowing peaks. They are already illumined by the rising sun. In the opposite direction stretches the broad, silvery sea. The Gulf of Fiume! Thou knowest it. Dost thou not understand me? Thou wouldst smile with astonishment at the similarity between the white lake of mist in the lower Gai with the above-named gulf. On the bright waters of the Quanero a ship is gliding—it is a hawk, hovering above the white mist. And lo! yonder, where the sea merges into the horizon, the sun is rising. The awe-inspiring, the huge, the bloody sun! A glowing red disc, shedding no ray of light, darker on one edge, as if a part of it were in shadow. Is it then the same sun, which a few hours later will stand like a bright planet in the sky, dazzling every eye by its overpowering light? Slowly it rises above the horizon. There is no reflection in the sea of mist, where only the mountains cast their shadows, the edges of which are iridescent with the colours of the rainbow. Then the sun begins to shine with greater force, and, with all the regularity of design, it starts on its course through endless space.

The poor city people! They are sleeping now,

—the same men and women, who, fourteen hours later, will be buying tickets and crowding into stuffy boxes to see a sunrise in the theatre.

Twenty-fourth Sunday.

I have immortalised Saufüssel, the slinger! King David, in his shepherd days, slung a stone at the giant Goliath; Saufüssel has slung one at Adam's flock of sheep. That was his way of amusing himself during the Whitsunday festival, and he succeeded in breaking the fore-leg of a ewe. He considered it a great joke. I divested him of his garments and inscribed a variety of impressive lessons on his back, bearing in mind the ancients, who deemed it necessary to write their most important documents upon parchment. And now the youngster is going to lodge a complaint against me with the new deputy, Kulmbock, whom he expects to bring about a reformation, and then no one is to be allowed to come near him who does not acknowledge that apprentices shall obtain their rights. According to the new law apprentices are to be punished no more. At all events, when the rebellion breaks out, Saufüssel thinks it is not with the aristocrats that one should begin, but with peasant farmhands from distant parts. He seems to be slandering one of these already.

Kulmbock is putting on airs at present. On workdays he wanders about among the peasants, collecting reports of wrongs, grievances, wishes, and demands, to take before the *Landtag*. And there

he plans to say: "You, who would always oppress us! We also are here, we! And we are not going to swallow any of your broken glass, either; not we! We will join the Socialists; then you 'll catch it, sure enough!"

Sunday afternoons he sits with the inn-keeper and the priest. The latter does not think much of the Socialists; the Conservatives, with the clergy at their head, would be much better associates. To which Kulmbock replies: "We have held to them long enough, and they have been growing stronger while we have been growing weaker. Now, thank God, no one shall be able to turn me! No one shall get ahead of me!"

I say to thee, friend, this Kulmbock is the true peasant-Bismarck!

And now for the story of the wounded sheep. Rocherl, as a companion in suffering, felt especially compassionate towards it and was about to arrange a hospital for it on fresh straw in a corner of the barn, when his sister came and begged the animal away from him. The lad was delighted to have Barbel again express a desire for anything and gave her the sheep at once. She took the heavy creature in her apron and carried it into her own room. Here she bathed the wound with luke-warm water, cut away the wool, laid a pitch plaster on the leg, which she bound with a soft rag, then put the animal on some straw in an old basket.

At first it cried piteously, but after a little seemed to feel quite comfortable and gazed with a look of

gratitude out of its four-cornered eyes at its benefactress, who then gave it a supper of fresh clover and warm milk. We all stood around to assist if need be at the binding of the leg, but Barbel did everything alone. In the meantime I glanced about her room. There was the distaff, the white polished linen-chest, the little sewing-table, and at the window flowering plants. She provides the whole house with these. Thou knowest Gretchen's room. Many an invading Faust has been guided thither by Mephisto.

But this has nothing to do with what I am writing. It is only a bit of rhetoric, and stupid at that.

As the ewe began to grow restless once more, Barbel spoke to it tenderly as to a child. "Does it hurt again?" she said, rocking the basket gently to and fro like a cradle. And all the while she herself was so serious and so sad.

"I wonder why she never laughs any more?" said the mother afterwards by the fire. "Everything is just the same now as it always has been. Who has done her any harm?"

In the meantime old Marenzel had arrived and she started at once for Barbel's room. But her dachshund in the basket began to growl at the sheep, frightening it so that it tried to run away. One would have supposed that they would have chided the mother of the slinger. But no, not a word of blame; they merely requested her politely to go into the other room. There was no place to sit down in Barbel's little chamber and she could

rest better in the living-room. There she fed her dog with lard and salted snails, which the darling refused, being already full to bursting. As Marenzel heard Adam's wife sighing and complaining that her daughter never laughed now, she offered from her store of wisdom the following:

"Hast thou already looked, Traudel, to see if there are spots on her finger-nails?"

"On whose? Barbel's? Her finger-nails?"

"If," continued the old woman, "there are spots on the finger-nails of her right hand, then a great happiness is in store for her, but if there are spots on the finger-nails of her left hand, a misfortune is before her. And if there are spots on the nail of her ring-finger, then she has trouble with her spleen, and when one has trouble with the spleen, one can never laugh."

If I know my dear philosopher aright, he will now regard his finger-nails, as we all did at supper that night, our own and Barbel's. On her little plump left hand was nothing noticeable, excepting that it was beautifully shaped. The Eternal Sculptor can do that when He will. On the rosy nails of her right hand, which is equally beautiful, were a few white spots. Snow-white, like tiny cherry-blossoms. The housemother glanced significantly at Adam. She knew that it was the spots. So good fortune awaited her and her spleen was all right. But why then did she never laugh?

The next morning Barbel gave a cry of astonishment. Franzel heard it and thought: "What is

Barbel so happy about thus early to-day?" The grey ewe in the basket had given birth to a little black lamb. The mother was licking its young one and Barbel was standing over it, wondering what had happened.

Adam whispered to his wife: "That is good; now she will be happy. Now she has something to love."

And she began at once to nurse the little wriggling creature, which still stood so uncertainly on its four long legs. None of us were allowed to enter the room. Rocherl, however, succeeded in gaining an entrance in the afternoon. He had with him a red ribbon wrapped in paper, which he opened, waving the bright streamer before his sister's eyes.

"Canst thou use this, Barbel?"

"The ribbon? For what should I use the ribbon?"

"For the little lamb; I thought it would look nice around its neck."

"Dost thou think we are as vain as all that?" she asked, mischievously. "Thou shouldst wear it thyself if thou hast bought it."

"I did not buy it. It was given to me by Kulmbock's Fronerl."

"And thou wouldst put it on the little lamb?"

"I wanted to do it to please thee!"

She stroked his hair. "What a foolish brother thou art! That which is given as a present one should not part with. One should keep it."

He turned away impatiently: "I thought as much. Whatever comes from me, thou dost not

care for any more. Thou art willing to accept anything from every other man."

"From every other man! What dost thou mean by that, Rocherl?"

He bit his lips and closed his eyes, pressing his hand against his breast as if seized by a sharp pain.

"Thou art childish, Rocherl," she said, tenderly. "From every other man! Listen, thou must never say that again. One can only love one."

"Why dost thou never love me?" he cried.

"Thou little goose! Thou art my dear brother!"

He threw his arms around her neck, kissed her on the cheek, and staggered out at the door.

That same evening I heard him muttering: "It must be! It must be!"

For some time I have noticed that Rocherl is growing paler from week to week and his eyes have such a peculiar expression. I don't know why, but his eyes are unpleasant to me. Formerly they were not so. Something seems about to shoot forth like a spark driven by the wind. I wonder if there may not be spots on the finger-nails of his left hand. This variable mood of his is certainly far less attractive than Barbel's quiet gravity. Thus the lilies bloom in silence.

As for myself—that I may give thee all the current news for once—I am well, thank God. The work is not heavy at this season. The tillage is over, the meadows are watered and cleaned. We are working leisurely in the forest, cutting into firewood the fallen trees and dry branches thrown down

by storms. The wood is first split into logs, then piled up, to be transported later on a drag to the farm. Next come the preparations for harvesting; the scythes must be sharpened, the rakes repaired, the pitchforks furnished with new handles, the basket with new bands, the carts with new wheels.

We are making a vegetable garden. With iron poles we bore holes in the ploughed ground, enrich it with compost and set out the tender cabbage plants. A scarecrow is then put up to protect this important product. And now it was proved what a farmhand from distant parts could do. With an old pair of Rocherl's linen trousers, a tattered coat and a torn hat, belonging to the housefather, he dressed up a bundle of straw, which he provided with a wooden pole for a spinal column, then placed the whole in the middle of the vegetable garden. It showed a great deal of character and of a kind that here makes an impression far and wide. The creature spread out its arms, and by aid of a cross-bar, it retained the position with a dogged perseverance. In its hands it held a number of little boards, which clattered against each other at every breath of wind, so that the rabbits might take alarm. The older ones—that is, those of last season—are not so easily duped. They let the harmless gentleman with his martial aspect and straw head stand and rattle, while they calmly eat up the cabbage heads, which are their favourite dish even in summer, although a free table is spread for them everywhere. But the

inexperienced rabbits, the cowards, cherish a fearsome respect for Mr. Policeman on the pole and they do not venture into the cabbage patch.

As I do not always feel inclined to sleep on these beautiful nights of early summer, I have often assumed the office of scarecrow myself. Near the vegetable garden is a cherry-tree, beneath which I sit on a bench, enjoying the night. Last Friday I was there again. It was warm, almost sultry, and the sky was overcast, while sheet-lightning played above the high mountains. In the house every one seemed deep in sleep. Even the cow-bells in the stable were no longer heard. Not a fire-fly was visible in the grass or among the trees; only the flashes of lightning from all four quarters of the globe. The stillness was almost fearful. I wandered slowly along the ridge towards the grove, listening for some sound in the distance. Naught but deepest silence. I retraced my steps in the direction of the house, thinking: Human heart, peace be unto thee! And as I turned the corner, a man was standing before her window, which was open. From within came the sound of violent sobbing. The man said something, but I could not understand what it was. He seemed to be trying to say comforting words, he spoke so gently. Who should it prove to be but the schoolmaster!

"Canst thou still love me, now?" said the voice inside.

"Do not reproach thyself, I beg of thee. Let me bear the burden. I will not leave thee!"

Within the sobbing continued. "My poor father! My poor father!"

He spoke again softly and comfortingly; he was trembling with excitement while she wept and wept.

"Thou shouldst have told me sooner," he said.

"I was hoping that God would let me die. I have begged Him to."

He still endeavoured to quiet her, but she wept and wept. Then I went to my room. What was it that the teacher told me on our walk through the gorge? If it should be *that!* Bracing myself to meet the blow, my heart went out in sympathy to the poor housefather. With his weak lungs he will fare badly when he learns it, and evidently she has told the teacher this.

I lay down upon my straw bed and then rose again. I went out on the grass plot. All was quiet; he was no longer standing under her window. And as I was lying once more in my bed, it occurred to me: has the window a lock?

Twenty-fifth Sunday.

This chapter is to be about the *Jungfrauentag* (Maiden Day), also called "Wreath Day," which we celebrated last Thursday in Hoisendorf with a solemn procession through the village and away over the meadows, while up on the Rechenstein the noise resounded like cannon. Yes, here powder cries out in prayer to Heaven, doing penance for the harm it does elsewhere. If the gentlemen of *The Continental* could only have seen me marching in company

with these peasants, with bared head and praying aloud, they would have exclaimed: "What will a man not do to gain twenty thousand *Kronen?*" Bah! Why should my pen be guilty of writing such things? I have done with them all and forever, I hope.

The country pastimes, such as wrestling, jumping, finger-hooking, bowling, card-playing, visiting one's sweetheart under her window, and poaching, would have required a longer time to entice me into the turmoil of peasant life than the work and the suffering have done. I have often noticed that pleasure and joy set people at variance with one another, while suffering draws them together. The latter has been my experience here. Human beings never harmonise so well as where there are bleeding hearts. As the priest recently said from the pulpit: "Where suffering abides, love and faith can easily find an entrance." It may be so.

Friend, I did not walk behind the Sacrament because it was the custom. He who has ploughed the fields himself, walks humbly under the burning sky with the band of worshippers, whose petition rises from a thousand hearts: "Lord God, All Powerful, guard the fruits of our earth! Protect us against lightning and storms!" And were there nothing but relentless nature to receive the prayer, where so many beings wish and long for something in unison, a new strength is engendered and the wish must be fulfilled. In some poetical work I once read: "If a moment should arrive when all created beings

unanimously willed not to exist, the world would cease to be." If the world could be annihilated at a common desire, so a common desire would also be able to rehabilitate it. I lay much stress upon unity in love, in hate, in desire. In this unity might perhaps be found the point whence destiny could be guided.

Some such thoughts as these inspired me as we walked praying over the meadows. The dear God will have to bear with this kind of worship from the farmhand from distant parts; it was, indeed, nothing more than the declaration: "I agree with all that the others are praying for, O Lord!"

The young men, with whom I was walking, seemed from time to time to be performing other devotions also, and it is possible that the wicked Adamshäuser farmhand may have been of the same mind in this as well. Oh, these crooked paths! Whenever we turned a corner we could see in front of us the head of the serpent, or behind us its tail. We beheld not only the red canopy under which the priest in his vestments was carrying the monstrance, not only the four lanterns suspended from poles, and the flags, not only the musicians with their trumpets, clarinets and drums: we beheld also the long procession of white-robed maidens with sprays of rosemary in their hair. The spray of rosemary in the hair is here the public confession of maidenly purity. This confession is made once a year, on Corpus Christi Day. Here march side by side little and big, beautiful and—otherwise, and from the latter this modest

declaration seems all the more probable. Some are too poor to procure a white gown, and they wear their blue or gaily striped Sunday garments, but the green spray on their parted hair is just as charming and pure as on that of the white-robed maidens.

As a matter of course, the eyes of the young men wander continually in this direction, for they know that they can almost surely rely upon this old custom. A girl who openly wears a wreath upon her head through Corpus Christi Day not only sets a high price upon herself, but frequently she is not to be had at all. One would scarcely dare to follow the example of a young woman in Sankt Kunigunden, who had secretly fallen. She wound about her head a spray of rosemary which during high mass changed into a spray of nettles, whose stalks grew so high that they could be seen over the entire church. No one would care to undergo such an experience. It would be preferable to stay away altogether and leave the question open.

"Why are the young men alone exempt from this public confession?" I jokingly asked Rocherl. He looked at me in amazement and replied that I should not ask such a stupid question. What ought one to think of an answer like this, philosopher?

In the procession Schragerer's man walked beside me with Almhalter's Blasius, and behind us was Saufüssel. During the psalter they carried on a conversation in an undertone about the girls who were not present.

"Gleimer's daughter has probably gone up to the Alm."

"And Kulmbock's Fronerl?"

"She is helping to carry the image of the Virgin; dost thou not see her? Over there, the tall one with the red-netted shawl around her shoulders. She has an entire rosemary garden on her red hair, and she has wound three sprays of green about her head. Well, she must be all right! More than all right!"

"Hast thou not seen Adam's daughter yet? *Mein Gott!* Barbel not here!"

"Evidently she is going to play truant from church to-day." And the rogues commenced to giggle.

Later, at noon, when Adam came home from church, he entered the girl's room, where she was in the act of folding up some linen on which she had been sewing.

"Is it a working day with thee, Barbel?"

"I don't get any time to sew on work-days."

"I thought that thou must be ill not to go to church for the Corpus Christi service."

She knotted her thread somewhat excitedly, then said calmly: "Father, I had nothing to put on my head. That stupid lamb got into my garden yesterday and ate up the rosemary."

"I am surprised that thou didst not take better care of it, child!" said Adam, and he went out into the garden. It was as she had said. The rosemary sprays were bitten off and wilted.

Soon after, the mother entered. I was standing in the shed behind the door. At first she tried to

appear quite indifferent. But I well understood the twitching of her brown, knotty hands.

"See here, Barbel!" she said, "why didst thou not go to church?"

The girl did not reply to her mother in the same way that she had answered her father.

"I never saw such goings on," continued the housemother. "Let the old people stay at home in their huts! But every respectable girl is in the procession with her wreath, as she should be! Wilt thou explain thyself? Just wait a bit and I will get at the bottom of this. Thou hast been stubborn long enough, and no one knows why."

"I have never been stubborn, mother!"

"No! Not been stubborn! What dost thou call it, then? It is not nice of thee to keep so silent all the time and to wear a face that is a picture of misery. Is something wrong with thee? Dost thou want something? Has anyone hurt thee? I will not endure such disrespect!"

"I am not disrespectful," said Barbel.

"The people are all talking about it!" continued the housemother. "I was obliged to avoid them because everybody was asking on the way to church, 'Where is Barbel to-day?' and 'Why does not Barbel show herself?' I had to lie to them by saying that thou hadst the toothache. Thou wouldst bring shame and scorn upon us all if everyone did not know that thou wert an honest girl!"

Barbel turned aside to put the linen into the chest. Her mother followed her a few steps and

said: "Barbel! Look at me! Look me in the face!"

The girl staggered out of the room.

The housemother stopped. As if rooted to the spot she stood there staring into the darkness of the neighbouring room where the girl had disappeared. She did not speak a single word, but she raised her arms and folded her hands.

Then came dinner. Barbel did not appear, nor did Rocherl. No one asked where they were. The rest of us sat in silence, having no appetite for our food. One after the other they laid aside their spoons, arose, and left the house. Finally I was left alone, wondering what it all meant. In the afternoon the housefather went out on the heath to gather spoonwort, a remedy for the spleen.

Early yesterday morning, as I was watering my cattle, I heard a wild scream near the corner of the house, and I saw Rocherl, a wood-cutter's axe in his hand, running through the cherry orchard out to the pasture towards the grove, chasing someone. And close to the house stood the scare-crow, as if it had walked over there on its pole from the vegetable garden. Only the arms were no longer outstretched with the little boards, but were held crossed over its breast and something was lying in them—a straw doll tied together with string. And this monstrosity was standing before her window!

I think the bogie had been seen by no one excepting Rocherl and myself. I carried the thing into the barn and tore it into a thousand pieces. I

watched the whole day to see if, after all, the family, or even she herself, might have seen the horrible insult. 'But they showed no sign; only the same quiet sorrow as usual. Even with Rocherl I did not exchange a word on the subject; he was agitated the entire day.

And he who had committed this unheard-of outrage to Adamshaus—thought he could send me to prison!

Twenty-sixth Sunday.

In the large living-room, built into the fireplace, is the oven, the back wall of which, with its green tiles, projects into the adjoining room. Cracks have formed in this wall, and when baking is going on the smoke escapes, filling the housemother's eyes with tears,—at least, that is what she says when she appears with reddened eyes. The oven must be repaired and the fireplace also has its weak spots, its cracks and holes, where beetles have built a fireplace of their own.

So we, the housefather and myself, went out on one of these days to dig clay. There are marshes all through the valleys, but white clay is rare. My peasant knows by the kind of grass growing whether it is to be found under it or not. Behind the ridge, over in the Brandstein gorge, we discovered it at last. It was not exactly easy to force our way through the underbrush and dried grass to the spot, but there was the genuine clay, which is also sometimes used for making whitewash.

My old Adam thrust his spade into the moist, untouched soil, while I filled the bags with the clods. Nearly the entire day he scraped and dug in this manner, without speaking a word, until I felt impelled to say: "Father, let me do that. It will bring on another attack of asthma."

He made no reply and continued his digging. He was finally obliged to stop and sit down on the ground. Slowly wiping his forehead with his shirt-sleeve, he said: "Yes, my dear Hansel, so it goes." And that was all. He turned his head a little to one side as if trying to hear what the splashing water was saying. It seemed to say nothing; it only splashed and splashed without ceasing.

"Yes, that is it," Adam finally continued; "if a time should ever come when things seem hard to thee in this world, and thou art dismayed, Hansel, then keep steadily at work." How sadly he said it!

"*Mein Gott*, father, thou never dost anything but work. And thou wilt wear thyself out before thy time. Thou hast other people to work for thee."

Taking out a part of a loaf of bread which we had brought with us for our luncheon, he held it towards me, together with his pocket-knife, saying: "Cut off some for thyself,—a good thick slice. Oh, yes, when I was young there were enough men who wanted work, but that has long since ceased to be the case. It will soon be so that one cannot trust them to do anything. And they must be handled as carefully as an egg, or they will run away. Only yesterday our neighbour Gleimer lost a few hands

again, now when they are most needed. For that reason—" Here he put a piece of bread into his mouth and said no more.

Then, of course, I felt that I must ask: "Have I given thee any occasion to say this? I was not conscious of it. I am perfectly satisfied."

"Hansel," he said, looking at me, "I cannot quite make thee out yet. I must speak frankly. I have been farming for thirty-five years, but such a one as thou art, Hansel— My wife says the same, only she dislikes to tell thee of it. For if thou shouldst realise what thou art worth to us, she thinks thou mightest demand higher wages. Oh, no, mother, I tell her, if I know Hansel aright, he is not that kind. He was sent to us by the dear God."

Friend Alfred! In thy last letter thou didst express a fear that the wager might not hold good because I had no writing to prove it. I need none. And now if they offered to double the number of *Kronen* to allure me away from here—I would not leave this man.

I held out my hand to him, saying: "Trust me, father Adam. I will tell thee about myself at some future time. In the meanwhile just know that Hansel also would like to go to heaven one day and so he helps where he is needed."

"Hast thou really a bit of faith, after all?" he said to me. "A man like thee might so easily have given up God."

A man like thee! Could he have suspected from what quarter of the globe I come?

"Well," he continued, "my great-grandfather used to say: 'The pine-tree knows nothing about God, yet it grows towards heaven. And this universe of ours must have all kinds of props or it would roll away from us.' "

"Didst thou know thy great-grandfather?"

"He lived to be one hundred and three years old."

And then Adam told me various things about his forefathers. Since the memory of man they had lived and worked on this farm. Not one of this race of Weilers had ever been in foreign lands, not one had remained in the army, or had done anything extraordinary. They had continued to live under the paternal roof in honesty and purity, according to the custom of their ancestors. "Not one of them ever brought dishonour upon the house," he added; "thou canst see for thyself in the parish register." The place had always been called Adamshaus and each Adamshäuser had had but the one life duty to perform, to keep the farm for his children.

"And these children," said Adam softly to himself, "make one—" he heaved a deep sigh, "make one so much trouble! Take some more bread, Hansel."

To my assertion that he, indeed, had good children, he answered: "Oh, yes; oh, yes! If they were not good, I should not mourn so about them. One is a poor sick wretch with his hand. The well one, who is away among strangers, is making himself ill."

"Valentin! Is he ill again?" I asked.

"Homesickness, or something of the kind." Adam searched his pockets and finally produced a crumpled letter which he requested me to read. I will send thee a copy of it:

DEAR PARENTS:

"I will begin my letter by thanking you for the money and by telling you that I am out of the hospital, but I do not know what ails me now. None of us are to be allowed a furlough, as a campaign is being talked of. If that should take place, I cannot say what may happen. Best of all I should like to run away at night and go home. Rocherl's letter has shocked me very much. How sorry I am for him! But his hand shall be dearly bought if I ever catch that hunter! There is no news; the practice marches in the heat are not particularly easy. I will close my letter with a thousand greetings to you, my dear parents, brothers and sister.

"I remain

"Your grateful

"VALENTIN.

"LAIBACH, June 24, 1897."

A postscript followed, in which Valentin warned his family against the strange farmhand. "Do not trust him, for who knows what his intentions may be! There are all sorts of people in the world."

Now at last I understood why Adam had talked to me as he had. He had evidently been making no effort to conceal his doubts concerning me or the confidence he felt in me.

"As far as the last is concerned," I said, return-

ing the letter, "were I in his place I should probably not have written otherwise. When he comes home he will see me. We will write to him this evening. That about the campaign is newspaper gossip. In the autumn the annual furloughs will surely be granted. And a brave peasant lad must put that idea of running away home by night out of his head at once."

Adam intertwined his thin fingers, saying: "Thou couldst not believe it, but whenever I hear someone knocking at the front door in the night, Valentin occurs to me and I think: Now he has come and tomorrow he will be caught and shot."

"Thou always thinkest of the worst at first. A man who has so much trouble as it is should not make life even harder for himself. And there are other things to comfort thee. Now, there is Franzel; thou canst take great pleasure in him. He has a good head and will accomplish something."

"Yes, yes," replied the housefather, "the teacher says that too, if Franzel can only get away from here. So it goes, one boy wants to come home, the other to go away. And one child is just as much to us as the other. With the girl——"

He rose, walked a few steps, and then returned. He broke a twig from an alder-bush and dropped it gently on the ground. "With the girl," he said, then stopped again, "it is really a cross."

This burden, I could easily see, was his heaviest. If he wished to relieve his anxious heart, should I not help him?

"Barbel?" I said. "It is not every father who has such an affectionate child."

"I cannot sleep half the night for worrying about her. Things are not right with her. Hansel, things are not right with Barbel. She is quite heart-sick about something."

Heart-sick! And that worries him!

"Would it then be so surprising?" I asked. "At her age she needs cheerful society. She has no companion, no girl friend, like other young women. It is hard for her always to be alone with herself, with the strict mother and poor Rocherl. And she cannot find much that is gay in us two old men. It is quite natural that a young creature should grow serious and sad in the course of time."

My reference to these possible causes almost relieved him. If I, too, could only have been convinced by my own words! I know the story of the scarecrow and he does not.

"She has no suitable companion," he said. "That must be it, that must be it!" But he soon grew thoughtful again, and, wiping the sweat from his brow, he murmured to himself: "If it should be something else—it would be my death-blow!"

Towards evening I loaded the bag of clay on my back and carried it to Adamshaus. Adam, supporting himself on the handle of his spade, walked slowly behind me. He carried no bag of clay—but it would have been easy for me to guess which of us bore the heavier burden.

Now, I have a devilish good story to tell thee. On Monday I had some work to do over by the edge of the grove. The hedges required weeding out, for Adam wished to sow rape-seed there. While at work I suddenly heard an echoing sound in the ravine as if someone were shouting somewhere. At noon I told Rocherl of this and asked him if the shepherds in the pastures shouted like that. Instead of replying to my question he said that it was not necessary to weed the hedge any longer, and in the afternoon I was to go down to the valley to repair the mill-dam. However, the housefather sent me back to the hedge, and Rocherl with me, to gather up the straw to burn. And then I heard the shouting again.

"It comes from the little hut over yonder!" I said. It stands behind the grove by the gorge.

"But that is unoccupied and no one ever goes there," said Rocherl in a hard voice.

"Yet someone is screaming there now. I will not be talked out of it. Come, we must go and see!"

When the lad saw that he could not prevent me from going, he accompanied me, saying: "Hansel, thou wilt find someone in the hut. Thou wilt find Saufüssel there, for I locked him in."

"Thou wretch!" I cried, "can it be true that thou still bearest him a grudge on account of Easter night?"

"Thou knowest better than to say that. It 's the scarecrow," said Rocherl, jerking out the words in his excitement. "Thou knowest all about it, for

thou didst destroy it thyself. Saufüssel set it up before her window."

"What, he again, the devil take him! Wherever a piece of mischief occurs, he is always at the bottom of it."

"Thou callest it nothing but a piece of mischief?"

"Stupidity, then."

"Dost thou know that I caught him at it?" continued Rocherl, as we walked through the grove. "Dost thou know that I would have killed the dog with an axe? He could n't get away and so hid himself in the little hut. I was bright enough not to follow him into the darkness. But I barred the door and he has been there ever since. Now thou knowest who is screaming."

"How long has he been there?"

"Since Saturday."

"But, fool, he will starve to death!"

" He may, for all I care," said Rocherl.

We arrived at the hut, which stands under a huge pine-tree close to the gorge. We peeped in through the little windows, that are without glass. Saufüssel was crouching in one corner, his clothes in tatters. As he became aware of our presence, he sprang to his feet, folded his hands, and whimpered: "For God's sake, let me out! I 'm so hungry! Oh, I 'm so hungry!"

We did not converse with him long.

"Thou hast insulted my sister!" cried Rocherl. And the prisoner retorted:

"Thy sister is—" a gesture followed, and then I had had enough.

"Rocherl," I said, "now I think myself that we will leave the miscreant a few days longer in prison, until he has learned how to behave. Come!"

And leaving Saufüssel screaming, begging, and cursing, we went away.

On Tuesday I returned to carry him a jug of water and to see how much he had improved. The door was wide open, the bird had flown. That same evening at supper Barbel said: "If the calf had n't run away into the gorge to-day we should soon have had a fine fright in the little hut. The shoemaker's apprentice had been locked in there! Four days ago. He could n't speak, but fell down by the brook and drank so much water that finally I pulled him away, and said, 'Man, thou wilt drink thyself to death!'"

"Thou hast let him out?" asked Rocherl harshly.

"Thank God, it was not too late!"

"Dost thou know that it was Saufüssel who——"

"Who injured the sheep's foot!" I interrupted hastily.

And no more was said. She knows nothing and we have told nothing, and I feel like laughing and crying at once, when I think what a wonderful sense of humour Providence sometimes shows.

The Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul.

This is an extra post, or a postscript to my last Sunday's letter. It concerns Saufüssel. The affair

troubles me greatly. The lad—Clemens, they call him now—is dangerously ill with typhoid fever. He is with his mother, Marenzel, who feels very bitter towards Adam's family. She claims to have saved Rocherl's hand, which he would have lost had it not been for her good plaster. And in return, this wicked boy had allured her poor Clemens into an isolated hut, had spitefully maltreated him, and then locked him in, so that he had nearly died of hunger, and now her dear son would have to part with his young life.

This noon, after dinner, Rocherl was questioned by his parents in regard to this.

"I am only repeating what the people are saying about thee, Rocherl," said the housefather. "But I know that it cannot be true. Who could do such a thing?"

Rocherl answered defiantly: "Why should n't it be true? It is true!"

"*Christi Heiland!*" cried his mother. "Thou didst lock the shoemaker's apprentice in the hut! So that he nearly died! Well, what for, then, God-forsaken wretch?"

Rocherl glanced around him, looked at Barbel, at his father, and finally at his mother, and replied: "That I cannot tell."

"Marenzel is saying everywhere that she will have thee arrested, and thou wouldst have to be locked up a somewhat longer time than Clemens was in the hut!"

Rocherl merely shrugged his shoulders. Later,

out under the cherry-trees, I told him that he must not allow such an abominable accusation to be made against him. Then he grew angry and cried: "Do not be so stupid! Thou knowest very well how it is. Vindicate myself! Nothing would be easier than that! But shall Barbel die of a broken heart when she hears of the insult? And shall my father be smitten with apoplexy when he learns of the scarecrow and all that it signifies? Leave me alone, I would rather walk away with the policemen." He is a brave lad after all!

The trouble, however, was settled in this very hour and by Barbel herself. She went down to the sick Clemens to comfort him and to ask him how it had all happened. The priest had just been there with the last sacraments.

The boy stretched out his feverish hands towards her and begged for pardon.

"What have I to pardon thee for?" she asked.

"That about the scarecrow and the child before thy window."

So she learned it from him. She did not even wince, but, giving him her hand, said: "Thou shalt have peace as far as I am concerned, Clemens. I will bear my own troubles."

How strangely Rocherl looked at her when she returned home and said to him: "Brother, Clemens sends thee his greetings and begs thy pardon. And he forgives thee, too."

Now they will both be sorry if Saufüssel dies. The mother knows about it, only the father cannot

yet comprehend what could have possessed Rocherl to do it. He wants to send Barbel up to the meadows to the herdsman's hut, to see if it will not cheer her up a little. O Adam, thou innocent man!

P. S.—Midnight. My hands tremble and yet it must be written to thee. A sudden change has taken place.

After closing this letter, I was spreading the litter for the oxen with a three-tined iron fork, when suddenly Rocherl sprang in through the doorway and seized it out of my hand. He was foaming at the mouth, and as I tried to snatch the weapon away from him he turned it against me.

"What art thou doing, man?" I cried.

"Dog, I 'll kill thee!" he snorted and we continued our struggle for the fork. He is out of his senses, was all that I could think of. His one well arm was twice as strong as usual, and we fought like two tigers, plunging from one side of the stable to the other, until at last the pitchfork was in my hand.

Motionless we stood opposite one another.

"What does this mean?" I asked.

"Thou shouldst know that thyself!" he said, grinding his teeth.

"*Bei Jesu im Himmel,* I do not know!"

He answered slowly as if dreaming: "*Bei Jesu im Himmel?* Thou dost not know? Then I shall have to refresh thy memory."

"What is all this talk about? Tell me, what thou meanest!"

"Do not try to hide it, Hansel. Confess it frankly, that it is thy fault. She——"

Now I understood him. To think that he should not yet know what I know! But how should he, when the teacher had confided it to me as a secret? So I said to Rocherl:

"If that is it! If I am suspected of *that!* When thou triest to knock me down instead of first finding out what could easily be ascertained, then—there remains no choice as to what is to be done. My thanks to thy parents for all their kindness; thou canst deliver them or not as thou wilt. To-morrow morning thy father will not need to waken me."

"Of course running away is the easiest," he said.

"Rocherl! My staying would not be very pleasant for thee."

Without another word he stumbled out of the stable. Then I began to gather my things into a bundle, thinking, "So this is the end!" When the bundle was ready and I stood in the doorway gazing out into the starlit night — he came across the yard. He stopped a few steps from the door and asked softly: "Art thou still here?" Then coming quite close to me he reached out his hand: "Hansel, forgive me. I know now. Stay here with us—stay here!" And falling on my breast he wept so passionately, so bitterly, that I felt like dying for sheer pity.

This, my Alfred, I have had to write to thee on this summer night.

Twenty-seventh Sunday.

How beautiful everything now is! The oat fields are fast growing green and are smiling back their thanks to us. The grain is already high, many of the stalks above a man's head. When I walk over the narrow foot-path through the grain field, the swaying heads stroke my cheeks and the tender blossoms remain clinging to my hair, while their intoxicating perfume fills my very being. With every light breeze the plain undulates like an azure sea. Here and there among the stalks gleams the scarlet poppy, or the deep blue corn-flower; their loveliness, however, finding no favour in the eyes of my Adam, who regards them merely as weeds.

The air is melodious with the song of larks. But these shy birds keep out of sight, chirping among the stalks or singing high up in the sky. What is all the artificial poetry of a great city in comparison with the beauty of a grain field!

A few days ago we experienced great anxiety for several hours, as a thunder-storm was raging among the mountains. At first sheets of white mist floated down into the hollows and ravines, and the heavy clouds gently lowered themselves over the upper valleys, while the air was filled with a rumbling sound. At the same time guns were fired on the Rechenstein. It grew so dark in the house that the consecrated taper which my housefather had lighted cast a red gleam on the wall as if it were night. On all occasions of impending danger, this consecrated taper burns; and praying softly, we gazed into the

mysterious flame. Clouds of smoke from the Palm Sunday branches burning on the hearth rose above the roof and the pungent odour was forced back to earth again by the heavy atmosphere.

Under the maple-tree stood Barbel, swinging a crucifix in the direction of the approaching storm, and murmuring the prayer: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . . In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness. . . . And the Word was made flesh!"

Standing near her, I noticed her expression of ecstasy as she pronounced the words from the Gospel of St. John. Her pale face gleamed weirdly against the dark background. Like a prophetess she stood there. Finally I said to her: "Barbel, thou shouldst go into the house now. See, the wind is whistling through the branches, the storm will be here in a few moments. Thou shouldst go into the house."

But she replied: "Leave me, Hansel. It is beautiful here."

The clouds of mist moved towards the valley, so that we were almost above them. Suddenly a flash of lightning shot through the air, so blinding that it was like a sharp blow on the eye. When the clap of thunder had ceased, I heard Barbel saying dreamily: "Here it is so beautiful!—O God, take me now!—The Word is made flesh——"

"Come, Barbel!"

She stood there with arms upraised, gazing half

terrified, half dreaming into the branches of the maple-tree: "Dost thou see how they whisper? The little children? Dost thou see them? They are rocking up there in the branches,—dost thou not see? They perch and they rock and they dance."

"Little children? Where?"

"Up there in the maple-tree. Rocking and whispering. Children who have died before baptism! The poor little souls! The buds are lying in tiny coffins, but the souls must wait in the maple-tree until the Christ-child comes on Christmas eve.

"Lord Jesus Christ,
In mercy come,
And lead them in
To their heavenly home."

At last the rain poured down in torrents, and taking Barbel by the arm, I drew her into the house. With trembling fingers she brushed the loosened hair from her face and gazed about her confusedly as if awakened from a dream.

When the storm subsided the trees sparkled like crystal in the light of the setting sun. A tiny taper rocked on every twig. But outside in the valley of the lower Gai all was wintry whiteness. And now, think of it, the rumour is circulated that the inhabitants of the lower Gai wish to lodge a complaint against those of the upper Gai, because guns were allowed to be fired here. It seems that for years both parties have agreed that there should be no

shooting before a thunder-storm to ward it off, for that is interfering with the will of God, Who is not to be dictated to where it shall hail and where it shall not. Secondly, it is a piece of villainy against the neighbouring country, where there is no shooting, and where the fleeing storm is forced to find a vent for all its fury. And thirdly, it is absurd to believe that Heaven will be frightened by the report of a few guns, considering that a thunder-storm has so much noise and fire of its own, besides the hailstones which it sends down upon the earth. However that may be, there has been shooting in the uplands, while in the valley the devil has been let loose. But Kulmbock said: "Let them complain down there if they wish! We 'll show them a thing or two. They 'll stare at each other when I begin to talk. I 'll swallow no shoe-nails!"

So the question of shooting to ward off storms is to come up in the *Landtag*. Gleimer insists that since the memory of man there have been no severe storms on Corpus Christi Day in the neighbourhood of Hoisendorf. And that is undoubtedly due to the shooting at this festival. Couldst thou not ask some scientist about it, Alfred?

Yesterday a dealer was here. He examined and measured the fields and bought the grain on the stalk. My housefather received a small sum of money in advance, which, however, will hardly suffice to cover the most important taxes and necessary purchases, but it is large enough to make the sale legally binding. The remainder is to be paid to

him in the early autumn, when the grain, uninjured by wind and rain, dry weather or the incursions of game, shall be delivered to the buyer in the sacks. That is: Is the harvest good, the customer has the advantage; if misfortune arrives, Adam bears the loss. He shook his head over this arrangement, nevertheless he signed the agreement. For he had not a *Kreuzer* in the house. In earlier times they could dispense with money, for they provided nearly everything which they needed in the way of food and clothing and houses, and were better satisfied with them than they are to-day with purchased articles. Adam tells me that his father did not spend thirty *Gulden* in an entire year on his house and family. My Herr Stein von Stein spends four hundred *Gulden* yearly for cigars, and his wife no less for gloves and cosmetics. But the industrious peasant! Something is surely wrong with the world!

The other day I was sent to Hoisendorf with a pair of oxen and a cart, and we had a fine time of it. I bought a peck of white flour, some rock salt, farming utensils, scythes and sickles and iron pegs, matches, and last of all gin and rose-balsam for medicine. The blacksmith at Hoisendorf is at the same time chandler, and from him I purchased window-panes and wax for candles. And then I bought a keg of oil. As I am a reformer by profession, I have extolled the advantages of petroleum so long to my good people that they have finally tried it. They like it and I am sorry. The oil costs money and the pine-tapers they had for nothing. It is a

fine kind of political economy that teaches the peasant to spend money and to acquire the habit of running in debt, which is one result of our numerous credit-associations. Adam still feels quite independent, and yesterday he said naïvely: "If worst comes to the worst then we will live upon that which we raise ourselves. And what the devil do we want besides!" Could any other class say as much?

But I was about to tell thee something else. I sat on my loaded cart guiding the patient oxen through the valley with a switch. I praised them for their obedience and for pulling so well, only using the switch to brush off the aggressive flies from their bodies. As we approached the brook I noticed the schoolmaster standing on the bridge fishing. His sleeves were rolled up and he had already caught two white-bellied trout, which he had neatly wrapped in a large lettuce leaf. He at once asked me if I would take them with me to Adamshaus, as someone lived up there who was fond of fried trout.

Evading his question, I said: "Take care, Winter, that Konrad does not shoot off thy hand!" For the hunter has the supervision of the streams.

"The hunter, Konrad, has grown tame," said the teacher. "His conscience must trouble him more than a little on account of Rocherl. Since that time he lets everything go, and one might now shoot the capricorn in the zodiac for all he would interfere."

"Oh, yes, because that belongs to God's hunting preserves, and this belongs to the Baron!"

In the meantime I had stopped my team. The teacher pulled down his sleeves and handed me up a cigar.

"Well, well! Thou smokest a thing like that!"

"No, not I. Thou shalt smoke it."

"Much obliged, Herr School Director! Or have we become a master butcher, or a cheese merchant, to have such a weed as that in our possession?"

"I got it from the deputy to the *Landtag*."

"So Kulmbock smokes *Regalitas?*" I asked with a laugh.

"He says the peasant must not let himself be fooled."

I returned the cigar, remarking: "Thou knowest well what I think of smoking. And if only out of regard for my oxen, I would not stick the thing into my mouth."

The creatures were quietly nibbling some spattling-poppies which grew by the bridge. I left them alone, wondering how I should best approach the teacher.

"Why dost thou not carry thy fish up to Adamshaus thyself?" I began.

"It 's devilish hot," he replied.

"One should go in the evening. Or better still in the night," I added.

"Really!" he said quite naïvely.

"Things are not very lively with us at present," I remarked.

"Is anything happening? Is anything happening?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, something is happening," I answered calmly. I believe I almost sang out the words.

With an expression of concern, he leaned against the shafts, looked into my face, and said: "Why do we talk thus? Thou knowest all about it."

I touched his shoulders with my switch. He started up and I said: "An ox-fly had lighted on thee. The creatures sting horribly."

"Thou art so queer again, Trautendorffer," said the teacher hesitatingly.

"And I fail to understand thee, Winter! As an honourable man—thou shouldst know what is now to be done."

To which he replied passionately: "It is unnecessary to bring up thine honourable man. He is not going to run away."

"Then we can come to an understanding very easily. Guido, thou must explain thyself. Thou canst talk frankly with her mother. With her father it is different. I believe he knows nothing yet, and I tell thee, thou must use the greatest caution with him, for he has heart-disease."

"And he suspects nothing?"

"He is an old child."

"Then the poor girl has her greatest trial still to undergo," he said with a sigh. Suddenly he cried: "Friend, how often have I cursed that hour!"

"Like all the rest who have been tempted by love."

"This damned love!"

"My friend, love is not damned."

"It is not what one imagines it to be! It creeps into one's heart like an angel passing through the room—so pure, so innocent. Why does it not remain thus?"

"Ho, Brownie, ho!" I shouted, for the oxen had started. The cart jerked forward, the teacher walking alongside, talking softly, rapidly, feverishly. "It would be stupid, it would be wrong to attempt to justify myself. I am entirely to blame, I alone! I was not content with her sisterly confidence, but my brain was on fire, for weeks my brain was on fire. I worked myself up to a high pitch of excitement. I watched for opportunities when I might take advantage of the innocence of my sweetheart, and then, quite unexpectedly, opportunity and passion came simultaneously—and the devil is to pay!"

"And philosophising about it afterwards does not help matters," I said.

"If I could bear the punishment alone—I would not say a word! I should be only too glad to bear it."

"Exactly! Adam causes the trouble and Eve bears the consequences."

"Eve!" he shouted. "I 'll not allow thee to compare her with Eve! As if she had betrayed me! That 's the cursed bother of it all! I was the serpent. The girl is as innocent to-day as she was a year ago. And now—she must suffer. She alone. If a man steals a watch, he is imprisoned; but he who ruins a young girl—he—it is an abominable state of affairs. I tell thee, every man should take care!"

"Dost thou mean something special by that? Set thyself up as a warning example to thy schoolboys. I need it no longer. My gay days are about over. There is no use in cursing oneself. It is more sensible to try and find a way out of the trouble. All I want to know to-day, my dear Winter, is when the wedding is to take place."

"It seems to me that thou hast just now referred to thyself. Hast thou always remedied matters with a wedding?"

"I tell thee, had it been necessary, I should certainly have done so. One adapts oneself to the class in which one lives."

"There I agree with thee," replied the teacher, and then he added: "What is thine opinion of the peasantry? Does every young man who likes a girl always marry her? And does the peasant inquire when he finally takes a bride whether he is her first lover or not?"

"The devil! What kind of subterfuges are these?" I cried.

"I am only speaking of adapting oneself to one's class, as thou hast just said. I think I know what is to be done."

"Well, I think, Guido, that thou shouldst not compare *this* girl with other peasant girls. Adam's family are exceptionally good people, although their outward life is nothing but one long hard working day. Were I the son of a king, I should woo *this* peasant maid with the utmost humility. Oh, yes, stare at me, if thou wilt! Thou hast known for a

long time that I love her. To-day, it is true, this love is still but an innocent sister—to use thine own poetical figure—but it might one day become something different. It might become an avenging spirit; dost thou understand?"

"Hans, I believe that thou takest me for a villain!"

Then springing down from the cart, I seized the teacher by his coat and cried: "Tell me honestly, wilt thou marry her or not? Yes or no?"

Without showing the slightest confusion, he replied: "If thou really wishest to know, friend Hans, that is not the right question. Thou wilt accomplish but little by trying to frighten me. If I answer thee, it will be because I wish to. And to prove that it is no sudden resolve or one forced upon me, but rather a predetermined one, have the kindness to look at these papers."

He took from his pocket a package of letters. One was the decision of the parish officials, who placed no obstacles in the way of his marriage. The other was the unfavourable answer from the school-board, refusing to promise the temporary teacher, Herr Guido Winter, the position permanently, or to raise his salary of three hundred *Gulden.*

I returned the letters, saying: "So, this is thine answer!" Yet my voice was not so full of assurance as it had been. To marry on three hundred *Gulden!* And I believe he has an old mother to support also.

"It is my answer and the only reason for my delay," said the teacher. "But I am in earnest. Once

I refused to fight a duel. The courage saved up from then will serve me now. I shall marry my girl on three hundred *Gulden.*"

"Good," said I, "thou wilt marry the girl. That stands sure?"

"As sure as the Rechenstein!"

"As sure as the Rechenstein," I repeated. "Let us talk of the rest another time. Thou knowest that I am thy friend. And now all three of us, the oxen and myself, must climb the mountain. But tell me first, Guido, how much time is there left?"

"Until about the first of September."

Twenty-eighth Sunday.

For some time, old fellow, I have been wishing to tell thee my experiences with the domestic animals, to describe to thee the physical—and listen—also the intellectual life of the cows, sheep, pigs, dogs, and hens! Let us, however, postpone the description until a more favourable moment, when the cattle are not looking directly over my shoulder at the page. Then we will write a book on the subject, entitled: *The Intellectual Life of Domestic Animals.* I will furnish the data, thou the system and the philosophy. The motto I will announce to-day: The oxen and cows are also human beings, excepting that the former have four feet. Their joys and sorrows are easy to discern, their love and their hate are often apparent. Their faith and doubt influence their wills as much as do our own. In their dreams they live another life like ourselves. And from their

thoughts our philosophers might learn much, were they only wise enough to comprehend the animals' speech.

As a matter of course these creatures on a peasant's farm are treated and respected like familiar household companions. Loved like friends, if thou wilt! Not alone have they a language of their own, but they also understand ours, as far as it concerns themselves. Thou must at some time have noticed a team of oxen on the road or at the plough; thou must at some time have watched the milking of a cow or the calling of the herd by the herdsman, and surely thou must have said to thyself: "There is more behind all this than our old wiseacres have told us."

My Adam is not a talkative man, yet when he is busy with his animals both his heart and his mouth open. He tells them stories from his own life, which are so innocent they might be published in any family magazine for calves and sheep. He makes jokes for their benefit, and if the oxen do not exactly laugh, at least they look amused.

"Come, Brownie," he said a few days ago to one of the oxen on the team, "be so kind as to let me hang my coat on thy horns for a little while!" It was a hot day and the creature carried the coat with proud, uplifted head, at the same time wearing a smirk of satisfaction. Best of all they like to hear his voice when he calls them to get their hay or salt, each one receiving a bit from his hand. But they also pay close attention when he is driving them at

the plough and know that his "*Hi*" means to go ahead and his "*Hota*" to stop. If he calls to them sternly on the pasture not to go into the oat fields or to nibble the clover, they usually obey good-naturedly. Still there is a great diversity of character among oxen. We have a grey one with a broad, short head and black nose, and he has always been a dunce. He quietly submits to everything, poor grass and the blows of the switch, is never excited, never exerts himself, allows his comrades to do all the pulling at the cart, while he walks with dignity alongside. And he eats the forbidden clover on the meadow with the same undisturbed conscience as he eats hay from the manger. We have a yellow ox that is industry and loyalty itself. He pulls with all his strength at the harrow or the cart, and the whip never needs to crack for his benefit. He can graze half a day on the grass-plot near the cabbage garden without once turning his clumsy head towards the tempting plants, because he knows from several experiences that Adam will not allow it. Then we have a black bull, with short, thick horns and a tremendously heavy fold of skin under his throat, which swings to and fro with every step. He is a pugnacious beast, fussy about his feed, and altogether useless for work. Whenever one of his own sex comes near him, he roars, and tries to give him a dig with his horns or to kick him with his hind-foot. Towards cows and calves, on the contrary, he is very polite. He is quite conscious of his worth to the entire community and does not

allow himself to be ruled either by a whip or a fence-bar. Only the crack of my whip sometimes makes him wince a little.

Since that night when the scarecrow came and stood under Barbel's window, we have a shaggy house-dog. The bankrupt, Nans, who intends to go far away to work in a factory, has bequeathed the animal to Adamshaus. For a week it lay chained, until it had become accustomed to the place and could be allowed to go free. The dog's name is Bismarck. It seems that when Nans was a soldier, he once saw this German prince, mounted on his horse, and his admiration for him was so great that he named his dog after him. The animal endeavours to do his namesake honour by his wisdom, keenness, and watchfulness. Tramps have an uncomfortable encounter with Bismarck, before they finally receive their bread of charity from the house-mother. Then, after turning around a number of times, he lays himself down on the straw in the shed, pillows his head with its broad ear-flaps on his front paws, and closes his eyes. Sometimes he snores like a mason, but at the approach of anything unusual outside or anywhere about the house, he starts up with a bark, trots out and examines the intruder to see if he is suspicious or not. Once he sprang upon old Marenzel's basket; she almost fainted, thinking that her poor dachshund was about to be annihilated; it was, however, only a joke on the part of Bismarck and he wagged his tail good-naturedly; but when in her gratitude for sparing her

pet, she offered him a bit of pork, he would not touch it. It is interesting to watch his eyes when he licks Rocherl's wounded hand. The gleaming wolf-eyes become gentle, faithful human eyes, which look up at the poor lad full of pity. And so, Alfred, I trust that thou, too, wilt offer thy friendship to this new addition to our household.

Adam owns a share in the pasture land on the Schareck. A short time ago we went up there with two pair of oxen and the heifers. One of the latter is a pet of Barbel's, and the parting between them was most touching. The farmhand was standing concealed from view behind the feeding trough with his pitchfork—so here was another scene for him to watch. First she stroked the heifer's cheeks for a long time, and scratched its head between the little horns just budding into sight, then she wound a wreath of evergreen about its head. Finally she began to talk with the creature in a low, confidential voice:

"Last year, dost thou remember, we two went up to the Alm together. We each wore a wreath on our heads. Since then things have changed somewhat. Thou wilt be surprised when thou comest home in the autumn."

The heifer opened its eyes wide: Surprised! Why then?

"I cannot understand my own feelings," whispered the girl, and her face changed and her features twitched. "I do not know whether to despair or to shout for joy." Putting her arm about the animal's

neck, she pressed her cheek against its head. The heifer turned its jet-black eyes towards the girl. It did not quite comprehend.

"I am nearly dead with shame," continued Barbel.

The animal seemed quietly to reply: "That does no good, it must be borne."

"My greatest anxiety is for my father and mother."

The heifer: "It will be nothing new to them."

"And then all at once I feel so well—so happy!" She kissed the creature passionately and her loosened hair twined about its head. Then she became thoughtful and murmured a prayer, of which I only caught the last words: "—that is my ruin, else I might die as a pure maiden."

I was lost in a dream; in fact, I grew quite giddy, quite intoxicated, and had to keep saying to myself: "Shameless fellow!" But how could I have escaped from behind the trough? My ears will burn for a long time.

Then we went up to the Alm, Rocherl and I, with the cattle. We were heavily loaded with provisions, clothing, bedding, and medicine for the animals. The heifer seemed to me like something sacred. It had become her confidante. I said nothing about it to Rocherl. He was almost gay and once even began to yodel, but stopped in the middle of a high note. The gently rising path over the meadows leads from summit to summit. The hillsides are smooth and the view so extended that I fear tourists

may yet find their way into Almgai. Fortunately, however, there is nothing here to climb. The Schareck, it is true, is a rugged, rocky eminence, overgrown with underbrush, but it has, the teacher tells me, no star in the red guide-book, and thou knowest that only those wearing a badge of honour are worth anything. So for the present we are safe. From the Alm the slope descends on three sides into the wooded valleys, along the banks of whose streams lie the stretches of green meadow, while beyond these are the peasants' fields. Yonder towers the perpendicular Rechenstein, at the foot of which gleams the little white church at Hoisendorf. The lower valley is concealed from view by mountains about whose summits hovers a thin veil of mist.

Our Alm huts, according to measurements made by the teacher, are over five thousand feet above the sea. Here stand a few groups of pine-trees, their rugged branches growing in all directions, having been turned into weather-vanes by the wind. The huts are in a little hollow under the Schareck, where the grass is strewn with bits of broken rock. In a space enclosed by the bars, the playground of the cattle, is a luxuriant growth of sorrel. The huts themselves are filled with melody, for the wind whistles in different keys through the cracks in the walls. The steep slanting roofs seem, indeed, designed to protect the herd and the beds from rain, but accomplish this purpose only in fine weather.

The indifference of these Alpine herdsmen to wind and rain is astonishing. If the sun shines,

they work in their shirt-sleeves, if it rains, they throw on their rain-cloaks, consisting of squares of woollen cloth in the middle of which a hole is cut for the head. Even in July rain and snow are not uncommon, and no one pays heed to the inclement weather.

On the day of our ascent to the Alm, others of our neighbours went up also, keepers and herdsmen, who establish their milk business on the Alm for the summer. Everyone was full of joy and life. The tinkling cow-bells, the mooing of the cattle on the meadows, the shouts of the happy mountaineers, the greetings of the newcomers, and the blowing of the Alpine horns, all these sounds were to me the revelation of a hitherto unknown life.

Twenty-ninth Sunday.

Now the festivals are at hand. The harvesting has begun. That which ripens first we deserve the least. We did little besides water the meadows, but this set free the imprisoned forces in the clod, and now the luxuriant wilderness of waving stalks, leaves, and flowers lies spread before us. In the morning the buds, moist with dew, raise their little heads and open in the sunshine, where, radiant with colour, they laugh the entire day. The wind rocks the dainty bell-shaped blossoms which are wooed by the humming-bees and the flaming butterflies dancing about them. Towards evening the weary flowers sink to rest and close their eyes, and the tiny insect world conceals itself beneath the leaves and in

the network of roots. One feels like standing forever to gaze at all this beauty, but instead, we must destroy it with the scythe. That is one of the curses of humanity—it converts flowers into hay!

Friend, mowing is difficult! The hardest work of the whole year. So Adam is lenient with me when it does not progress. Even the preparations denote something extraordinary: the ringing sound when the scythes are sharpened the night before, the loud call to waken in the morning, the hearty breakfast at seven o'clock out on the meadow. But first we must mow three hours. Grass wet with dew is more easily cut than that wilted by the sun. For several weeks I have been practising with this hideous weapon and now I can act the *rôle* of scythe-bearer passably well, and I mow down the long rows of blooming life in front of me, while Franzel, walking behind, spreads the hay with a wooden rake. A can containing water and a whetstone hangs down my back like a braid, only it is attached to my belt. And after about a dozen attacks on the grass, the scythe, which pays for nearly every stroke with a little nick, must be sharpened. If when bending over I happen awkwardly to spill the water over my head, then I am obliged to dip my whetstone into the wet grass. Nobody laughs, for each one has enough work of his own to attend to. The line of workmen in our case is not long. First comes the housefather, dressed in his flapping linen trousers; he stands bent over with feet wide apart, advancing one step with each stroke of the scythe. Then

follows my humble self, with my various faults; behind me the housemother, moving energetically and keeping close to my heels. It is a fearful procession, hour in, hour out. Fortunately one cannot think, for one's thoughts are all perspired out of one.

Barbel does the household tasks. Rocherl has handed over his work on the Alm to the parish herdsman, and he is now grazing sheep. He curses the hunter, Konrad, for having made him incapable of performing hard labour. "My father with his weak lungs must needs mow while I am an idle shepherd!" he complained to me in a deploring voice. If the young, hot-blooded fellow could only work like the rest of us, his strength would not be wasted on this demoniacal inner life, which sometimes causes me such great anxiety.

Adam is frequently obliged to stop mowing to take a long breath. The mother always brings the witches'-weed along, but up to the present it has not been needed. When the sun is high, we hang the scythes in the shade of some bush, take the forks and rakes and turn over the scattered piles of grass that they may dry thoroughly and be ready to stack by the next day or the day after. We dare not say a word about the weather, it is so perfect, and boasting might bring on a storm. Only once, Adam, almost overcome with joy, said that it was long since he had harvested such a good crop of hay as this year.

And, oh, the fragrance! Exquisite as that of the finest Chinese tea! The people do not realise why

they are so cheerful when they are haying; it is the intoxicating perfume of the withered blossoms. The sweat pours down our faces, forever confirming that ancient curse—or blessing: "Thou shalt earn thy bread in the sweat of thy brow!" And Thou hast kept Thy word, O Most Righteous God! I will mention another fact, that my old headaches, which formerly tormented me so during hot weather, have not troubled me yet.

Thursday evening, as I was crossing the yard on the way to my room, I heard the loud tones of the housemother's voice coming from Barbel's chamber. At first she seemed to be greatly excited about something, and then she began to scold. I did not hear the girl's voice at all. The next morning, as if relieved to have the dreaded storm over, Barbel tenderly caressed the black lamb, and I overheard her saying to it: "Thou art mine! Thou art mine! Yes, thou art mine!" The animal licked her red lips. Then Barbel laughed so loud that the lamb started up and looked at her in terror.

Saturday the housefather, Rocherl, and I were sitting on a pile of hay, partaking of our afternoon luncheon, which consisted of buttermilk and curds made into a porridge, one of the few articles of food that, in spite of my good training, I can never force down my throat. So Adam pushed the loaf towards me: "Help thyself, Hansel! Thou hast worked hard all these weeks. Now we have finished for today. It is a joy, such hay as this! It is a joy!"

Then, with our forks and rakes over our shoulders,

we walked slowly in the lovely holiday evening, the sun still shining above the mountains. Suddenly Adam exclaimed: "Thank God! Praise God! That burden is taken from my heart! Yesterday she laughed like a happy bird in the air!"

"Who could help being happy," I replied, "when the hay is so fine?"

He looked at me quickly and then away again. When the hay is so fine! What has the girl to do with hay?

"Her blood must be low, or something, to pull her down so in summer," he finally said. "*Mein Gott*, it is all one, sick in body or in soul! But the chief thing is that she is good. Thank God, she can laugh once more!"

The sparrows were twittering it on the roof. The few swallows that still circle about our house also seemed to know it. "Dost thou hear what they are singing?" Rocherl asked me. And he sang, imitating the bird's language: "The schoolmaster is a knave, a knave. He brings shame upon a girl and then deserts her, deserts her!"

"Stupid creatures, the birds!" I said.

The lad laid his finger on his lips: "Listen to what one is singing now: 'Shoot him! Shoot him!'"

"Come, come, what wilt thou think of next?" I said, laughing harshly. "I understand them better. This is what they sing: 'Feed them! Feed them! And if there are young ones in the nest, feed them well'."

The expression on the lad's face as he listened to the birds made me shiver. What kind of a human face was that? I held up my pocket mirror before him: "Wilt thou look?"

"If I want to know how handsome I am, I need only to look into the watering-trough," he answered. "Thou wouldst better give the mirror to the schoolmaster that he may see his nutmeg-grater face."

"Dost thou know, Rocherl, what makes a young countenance still uglier than small-pox pits? Give a guess."

"Leave me alone!"

"Dost thou know what disfigures a human eye worse than anything?"

"What, then?"

"Hate."

"—Hate?"

"Yes, hate makes one very ugly."

"Thou art not obliged to look at me if I don't please thee!" he said quickly, turning away. What idea can be lurking in his brain?

At dinner to-day things did not go quite as smoothly as usual. Barbel was absent again. She complained of toothache and said that she could eat nothing. The housemother was exceptionally mild and talkative. Among other incidents she told us about an acquaintance of hers in Krosbach.

"Such an excellent person, the very pattern of goodness and honesty! Only one slip, but she is young and she loved him! And now that has

happened to her which has been happening since the beginning of the human race. *Mein Gott*, it is nothing new. Very soon, as cousin Krisost once said, they will say in Krosbach that it is a shame for a young girl when it does not happen. Times have changed. Formerly it was a terrible sin, to be sure, but now it will soon be considered a great virtue. It is not the worst people, says cousin Krisost, who have the most trouble."

"Cousin Krisost is a scoundrel," interrupted the housefather. "The idea of making sin attractive; that is the last straw! At all events, such a thing will not be necessary in Adamshaus!"

The housemother said no more about her acquaintance in Krosbach. But, reaching her thin, bare arm over the table to stir the pork and vegetables in the dish, she asked who had heard the sermon to-day. "Was not the story of the Pharisee and the publican the subject?"

"No," answered Adam, "to-day we had the story of the Lord Jesus feeding the four thousand."

"Then I think we shall not starve either, if we do have one more to feed," she added.

"What?" he asked in a hollow voice. "Thou meanest when Valentin comes home for his furlough?"

But he left part of his dumpling untouched on his plate, and ate nothing more. I feared another attack of asthma for him. I think he suspects, only he refuses to accept the truth.

"*Kleine Kinder, kleines Kreuz, grosse Kinder,*

grosses Kreuz!" (Little children, light burden, large children, heavy burden), said my housemother, with a sigh.

Adam's shoulders and breast began to heave and with difficulty he groaned: "Mother, my smoke!"

Dost thou think it good for one to bury one's head in the sand? According to my theory, the dread of an impending misfortune is salutary; it lessens the sorrow when it comes. Just as too great a hope often detracts from an approaching happiness, since one's extravagant expectations are seldom realised, so after great anxiety, trouble is rarely so terrible as one has imagined it. And I wish my Adam might bravely dread the coming trial, that it may not suddenly overpower him with its weight.

Bravely dread! Thou understandest, philosopher!

Thirtieth Sunday.

This hot, busy haying season forces all else into the background, all evil thoughts and sorrowful forebodings. Even Barbel is out with her long-handled rake. Once she began to hum the song:

> "*Es ging ein Knab spazieren*
> *Wohl heimlich bei der Nacht. . . .*"

"That 's right, little girl." Adam called out in a loud voice. "Young people ought to be cheerful." He had heard only the sweet beginning of the song, not the ending.

"My heart will break!" I heard the mother sighing.

This morning I went down to Hoisendorf earlier than is my custom on Sundays, and it was not because of the church service. I went directly to the schoolhouse and said to the teacher:

"Every day which God bestows upon us thou art expected up at Adamshaus. It will soon be the end of July!"

"It is enough to drive one to desperation!" he cried, striking his head with his hand.

"But I cannot understand thee, Guido. Think of thy promise!"

"The deuce! Yes, yes, go up and marry her! That is very easily said, my Hans! Do let me arrange affairs first."

"Listen, Guido, I want to say something to thee. At the end of this year I expect to be a rich man. No, do not be alarmed, rich people never give away anything. But a loan, and of course at interest."

"I am not in the mood for jesting," he said.

"Nor I. But it is a part of this affair that the romantic farmhand should make a young couple happy. At New Year's thou shalt have two thousand *Kronen*. Surely thou wouldst like to marry thy wife and I want my romance. Well, then, hold up thy head, young man!"

He began walking up and down the room between the benches with heavy, excited steps. He held his hands behind him, his head bent forward. "I cannot help it," he said, "I keep thinking that the whole thing is accursed!" Suddenly he stopped straight before me and asked in a biting voice:

"Why then is this marriage of such great interest to thee?" The old infernal song over again! But this time I remained cold or rather I had grown cold.

"Winter," I said, "I have often advised thee to go up to Adamshaus. Now I will give thee a better piece of advice. Do not go up. Leave her, whom thou hast betrayed, alone in her misery and shame! Let her wither away and die in her youth! It were far better than for thee to become the torturer of her love, or than paining her with suspicions and driving her to despair with jealousy. A knave who ruins an innocent creature and then seeks for excuses——"

He started up like a wounded boar, tore off a lath from the bench and rushed towards me. I pushed him aside, saying: "The devil is to pay when a schoolmaster cannot reckon."

This he understood and he grew calm. Then he came up to me humbly: "Hans, it is love and anxiety that drive one frantic! Only leave me time enough to pave the way a little which shall at last unite us."

"What I have already said is said. It remains for thee to prove whether I have been unjust to thee or not. If so, thou wilt have thy compensation—" With this I hastened away. And it was a long time before the lightning ceased to play in my gloomy heart.

Since my sojourn in Adamshaus a change has taken place in me. I find that I frequently question myself about certain things which I have done:

Was it right? Did I make a mistake? What is it that has altered me so? Is it Adam with his patience? Barbel, with her secret love agony—"*von der niemand nichts weiss?*" Is it the goodness and excellence of these people? Is it the seriousness of work, the greatness and harshness of nature? *Mein Gott*, what a scatter-brained youth I used to be in the newspaper office!

It is gradually dawning upon me that I, too, must be good for something. According to my ability I must try and help this suffering, erring pair into the right path. But he is a fool with his suspicions. However, it is a question whether another in his position might not be the same. Out in the world a heated encounter like the one we have just had would have ended in a duel. Here we are both struggling with ourselves to do the best we can for this poor girl.

I have something else to tell thee now. We are going to plough during the coming weeks, that is, break up the ground for the winter wheat. I have been examining the plough to-day to see if it is in order. And as I was fastening with wedges the ploughshare, which had become loosened, I heard some one piping outside, "Hänsel!" and a second voice, "Gretel!" The next moment two of my colleagues of *The Continental* stood before me.

I have no desire to describe the charm of this meeting with Herr Sammer and Dr. Wegmacher. They burst upon me with a flood of witticisms, which were quite good-humoured, inappropriate,

and stupid, the only malicious thing about them being their quantity. My beardless cheeks caused great amusement. They were making a holiday tour and of course it was the merest accident that they happened to be in the neighbourhood of Hoisendorf, which was indeed dreary enough, but seeing a light from the distance, they had followed it, and this accounted for their sudden appearance before the classic knight of the pitchfork.

"Make yourselves comfortable, gentlemen," I said, "but do me the favour not to force me to introduce you to my household companions. I will accompany you down to the valley through the woods. In Hoisendorf there is a good inn, and early to-morrow morning, the earlier the better, you will find it delightful walking through the shady gorge out to the beautiful, bright world."

Really, I was in terror lest they should spoil everything, but the idea of the inn proved so attractive to them that the danger for Adamshaus was averted. On the way they gave me news of *The Continental.* Dr. Angelus Meyer, one of the editors, had emigrated somewhere. The reporter for the law courts had been taken to a sanitorium for nervous diseases. This was not very pleasing news to me, for the above-named gentlemen were witnesses to my wager. The third, the administrator, Lobensteiner, is still on hand. What did I write thee in regard to thy suspicion a few weeks ago? That three living witnesses were better than a dead stroke of the pen? Now I should prefer the latter.

Especially since I have taken it upon myself to support the schoolmaster's family. The editor-in-chief, the gentlemen said, did not like to speak of me, or when he did it was with a shrug of the shoulders, as if referring to an eccentric person who had sacrificed his good position by an absurd attempt at bravado. I sent him my best regards. But would not Mr. Farmhand accompany them to the inn? This kind invitation I refused, and as we came to the bridge over the brook, I parted from the gentlemen, expressing the hope of a happy meeting at New Year's.

"Good heavens!" cried one of them, "is that the way you take hold of a flail? The grasp of thy hand is a veritable menace to bodily safety!"

Then I was rid of them. A half-hour later I was kneeling in the dim room of Adamshaus praying the psalter with the family.

Thirty-first Sunday.

"That is nothing to thee, Hansel," my energetic housemother would have said. And indeed what is the sermon to any of us? The priest preaches to the people and not to the poor farmhand who a few years ago published a notice in the carnival paper that an entirely useless Christianity was lost, strayed, or stolen.

The honest finder seems to have left it in the Hoisendorf parish. The sturdy village priest, who has long since forgotten his course in theology with its dogmatic treasures and is therefore obliged to

expound the Gospel according to his own interpretation, is surely in possession of it. Our priest's sermons are not uninteresting. A straightforward German Michael, he explains the Word of God in a way that the parish may understand the easiest and put to the most practical use.

Yesterday evening there was a little religious argument in Adamshaus. On Saturday evenings it is the custom for Franzel to read the chapter from the Gospel of the following Sunday, and last night it happened to be the one in Luke upon the unjust steward. Thou knowest the parable of the steward who was dismissed by his master for his extravagance. He seems to have been a sly rogue, so long as he remained in service, doing his utmost to win the favour of his master's creditors, deducting one half from their debts, in order to retain their friendship when he himself should be reduced to penury. "And the Lord," continued Christ in the parable, "commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

After Franzel had finished reading this, Adam shook his head, saying: "I do not like that."

The housemother, standing by the fire, replied sharply: "No Christian should say of the Gospel: 'I do not like that.' The most he ought to say is: 'I do not understand.'"

"Do not understand!" repeated the housefather. "When it is so clear, how can one help understanding? Franzel, read that last passage once more."

And he read: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

"That is precisely as if we were to try and gain heaven by unjust means!" said Adam.

I was quite curious to see how the priest in to-day's sermon would evade the difficulty.

He stood in the pulpit, read the verses through, and when at the close he kissed the book, he said:

"These are the words of the Gospel for to-day."

I noticed my Adam moving uneasily in his seat. The priest, slowly taking a pinch of snuff, placed the horn snuff-box on the pulpit-table, pushed back the wide sleeves of his surplice, and began:

"Beloved in Christ! In the Gospel for to-day the evangelist might have been a trifle more explicit. From his statement it would almost seem as if Christ, the Lord, were praising the unjust steward for his rascality. I have no doubt that some among you would highly approve of that! But the meaning is otherwise. In this parable Christ intends merely to give an example of what arrant knaves all worldly people are and how simple the children of God. When the Lord says that we should make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness—what then does it signify? Does it signify that we should gain the mammon of unrighteousness in order to bribe people with it afterwards? God forbid! It

means rather, first, that riches are sinful, altogether sinful, not only those which are stolen, but also those which are acquired. Secondly: he who possesses riches should give them away to the poor and suffering as an unmeet and unlawful possession; thus may the mammon of unrighteousness be the cause of good works, which will lead us at last into the eternal mansions of God. Such is the meaning of the words: 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness!' Thus it is, beloved Christians, for our dear Saviour was incapable of proclaiming an absurdity! The fault lies rather with those who through ignorance fail to understand. And remember, follow the Word of God; do not defraud your fellow-men of money and worldly goods, for they must ultimately return them to you as unlawful riches. Not even in the so-called lawful way shall you acquire riches, but be content with that which you need for to-day. And do not be always anxiously saying: What shall we have to-morrow? The Heavenly Father, who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, does not forget you. Seek first the kingdom of God, that is, try to have a good conscience and to live in a manner pleasing to God. These are the chief things, all the rest will come of themselves." Here he paused, looked around the church, and then added: "If you wish to sleep a little, beloved, then I will stop. I know the work is hard at this season; he who works faithfully and to the glory of God is also on the road to heaven. I do not preach for the sake of preaching,

and you do not listen for the sake of listening. I say unto you, that the weary body is of the dust, while the soul is of God. The soul will sanctify the body and the dust of this body will also be sanctified and eternally blessed in the heavenly fatherland. Amen."

Thus he preached and that is his usual manner. The people look upon the Sunday sermon as a mere matter of form, after which they quietly return to their ordinary daily tasks. But the words must have done my Adam good; his face was transfigured with joy, to hear his honest work and his patience so blessed by the priest.

A few days ago my housefather was informed that the teacher was intending to call soon.

"A call from the teacher! On us! Well, well! What for, then?"

"He has something to talk over with us," said the housemother.

"Is it something about Franzel? Is he not studying well?"

"It has nothing to do with Franzel."

Adam asked no further questions. He became very quiet, not referring again to the schoolmaster. When, a few moments later, Barbel crossed the yard to the watering-trough and held her jug under the spout, while she dreamily gazed before her until the water ran over, her father, who was watching her, finally called out: "Barbel! Look, look, it is running over!" She started up in alarm, took the jug, and hastily re-entered the house.

When Adam is ploughing he frequently forgets to urge the oxen forward and stands still shaking his head. The housemother begins every day early in the morning to scour the table and the benches, to wipe off the windows with a damp cloth, and to see that not a bit of wood or straw is scattered on the floor. Whenever Bismarck barks out in the yard, she hastens to the window. Once it proved to be a beggar; another time a girl from the neighbour's, and the third time a pedler—but it is never the right one. Thus pass the first days of the week, and thus the last—still he does not come. Barbel frequently crosses the grass-plot, shades her eyes with her hands, and peers out into the sunny world. The sound of bells floats up from the distance, while near by the air is filled with the humming and buzzing in the cherry-trees where the gleaming red cherries are hanging on their long stems. Suddenly the girl gives a cry of joy. Is he coming?

Thirty-second Sunday.

In the newspaper I recently read a notice of a millionaire who had committed suicide on account of *ennui*. He was described as a young and handsome man, the darling of society. Had he lived in Adamshaus he would have suffered little either from *ennui* or from over-abundance. There are many kinds of demons hovering about the roof of a peasant's home, and among them hideous spirits that drive weak natures into the grave or into prison, but the demon *ennui* is not one of them. Work is

relieved by weariness, weariness by care, and care again by work. Under the protection of these geniuses man is safe from boredom. What if perchance this horrible vampire should one day creep in here?

Gleimer in Hoisendorf has an old farmhand whose limbs are bent by work like the branches of a cherry tree. He finds it unendurable when two holidays succeed one another in the calendar, and on the second he is so bored that he goes out into the field and digs up the sod. The priest once forbade him to do this, and the man answered:

"With all respect, worthy sir priest, if I may not work, then I shall go and rob somebody. One must have something to do!"

It is also remarkable that on Sundays the peasant lads refresh themselves from the hard physical labour of the week by bodily exercise, such as bowling, wrestling, slinging, and other games which strain the muscles. Philosopher, hast thou ever rested thyself from studying by study? Or is perhaps physical labour more natural and less exhausting than intellectual labour? Or is it the breath of this life-giving earth which keeps one strong and well? I sometimes wonder why instead of ten commandments there were not twelve. The eleventh should be: Thou shalt not be idle! The twelfth: Thou shalt not think!

And why are these letters of a farmhand being written? Do not, I pray thee, ascribe it to *ennui*, because thy Hans feels inclined to philosophise on

Sundays. Think of his lowly origin and how the tiresome hours spent on the school bench in his youth can never be recompensed. But now he is getting back to the soil.

On Wednesday, while—as I see by the papers—everything outside with you was being flooded, so that even high ground was under water and the railroad trains were standing in the middle of lakes, we sharpened our scythes. The oat fields are still green; only towards the south the spreading panicles are beginning to turn yellow. The rye is thick, high, and luxuriant, the ears lying heavily and lazily against their neighbours. "Golden ears!" the poet sings. I really know of nothing that gleams so brilliantly golden as ripe grain. Two hillsides on Adam's land and the adjoining fields are all aglow with the dazzling splendour and their bright reflection illuminates hill and dale.

"For many years," said my Adam, in his humble joy, "the grain has not been so fine as this summer." He hopes to harvest fifty stacks, that is, three thousand sheaves. But the joy is lessened for me when I remember that the grain awaiting our scythes no longer belongs to us alone. Who thinks of that? We must get to work now.

So on Thursday we went out into the yellow fields with our clinking scythes. The housefather sharpens his on the whetstone which he takes from his can and the crescent-shaped knife gleams in the sunlight. Then repeating the words: "*In Gottesnamen!*" he bends over, strikes the grain, and cuts

off the first sheaf. I am directly behind him, but I am glad that the gentlemen of *The Continental* did not honour me with a visit on this day. They would have witnessed the deep humiliation of their colleague.

It is far more difficult to bind a good sheaf of wheat than to write a newspaper article on the importation of Hungarian cereals. In cutting and binding I never succeed in making the stalks come out the same length. While Adam's sheaves are smooth and even as the thatches on a roof, in mine one stalk sticks out here, another there; one is too short, another too long, and when the sheaf is finally bound with torn bits of straw, it lies there like a limp, unkempt woman. And oh, the stubble! Here it bristles half a foot high, yonder a piece of the ground has been hacked off, leaving bits of earth clinging to the scythe. To cut the grain smoothly at the root, and with one quick turn of the hand to make the wisp of straw for binding out of two thin stalks, can be learned at no academy; that can be learned only in the high school of life, in the last *Semester*.

Harvesting is both a science and an art. How much knack is necessary, what a variety of motions, how many technical terms to be mastered! Little Franzel, who is having a vacation from school now, works sturdily with the others, and I admire, envy him; his hand seems to do of itself what with all my ingenuity I cannot accomplish. He has it in his blood, the "whetting," "measuring," "making

faggots," "cutting furrows," "binding sheaves," "removing stumps," "stooking," "stacking."

"That which I have not acquired by my toil and my intellect he has inherited from his mother." And if Mother Nature sometimes fails him, then the housemother helps him out. She is close behind him scolding lustily if he scatters a straw from the sheaf or bends a stalk. She scolds the boy, but she means me—and has every reason to mean me. "The great, strong booby is the most awkward of all!" I can almost hear her say, for I am sure the words are on her tongue's end.

While the housefather and his clumsy farmhand, the housemother and her nimble Franzel, were cutting and binding the sheaves and laying them in even rows upon the stubble, Rocherl was stooking them with one arm. On this first day we cut two hundred sheaves, which lay in sparse rows as if on a bier, many of them still decorated with gleaming poppies or bright blue corn-flowers.

When darkness came on and the grass had grown cool and damp, the others returned to the farm to attend to the work at the house, only Adam and I remaining in the field to cap the stooks, which here consist of six sheaves. He first sets up five sheaves so that the tops lean against each other like a pyramid of guns stacked in a soldiers' camp. While I hold this firmly to keep it from falling, Adam bends the sixth sheaf into a cap, or a kind of helmet, which he then places on top. Thus the stook is held together by the cap and also protected from

rain, that cannot drip through, but will run down the straws covering it on all sides. These stooks are left for several days standing in the sun to dry, and then comes the great hay-rick upon which they are loaded and carried to the barn.

Thou hast already learned so much that is superfluous, Doctor, Professor, and philosopher, that this detailed account of harvesting grain in the mountain districts will require little intellectual effort on thy part. If thou shouldst commit all these sheaves to memory, thy brain would indeed be stuffed with straw, although thou wouldst also have an over-supply of ears! Ah, how can I have the heart to jest when surrounded by such sorrow! This grain which we have begun harvesting we have been obliged to part with this very day. But first let me repeat to thee a little conversation.

It had already grown dark. The crickets were chirping in the grass, their continuous song re-echoing over the entire field. Grasshoppers were spattering our hands with tiny dew-drops. The sky was full of twinkling stars. Adam seated himself upon a sheaf, and wiping the sweat from his brow, heaved a deep sigh. After he had rested a while, his face turned towards heaven, he said softly: "If we were only up there already—all of us together!"

"Time enough for that, father," I answered.

"It is hard," he said; "I do not wish to outlive any of my family, yet I should be grieved for the others if they had to bury me first."

And I replied: "Then the dear God, even with

the best of intentions, would be at a loss how to arrange it."

"That is so, that is so, Hansel. The trouble is that we are all too broken-hearted, too broken-hearted. If I only did not love her so much, my little girl!"

I was about to answer when he rose wearily and said: "We must see to it that we finish our work. *In Gottesnamen!*"

We then capped the remaining stooks and proceeded slowly homewards. We walked through the fields of ripe wheat, the waving ears brushing against our cheeks. These were to be cut the next morning. The air was heavy and oppressive. The starlit sky gleamed angrily and the points of light seemed to send forth darts of flame. And as we gazed upwards the heavens appeared to be almost touching the earth, while from time to time a meteor flashed in dazzling splendour across the sky.

Adam stopped and, supporting himself on his stick, took a long breath, saying: "When one beholds it — the omnipotence of God!" Then he moved on. Whether I ever look into a religious book again in all my life, I know now what religion is. I never could have learned it at any professor's chair. A peasant has taught me out on the open field. Seven or eight hours later we experienced another form of God's omnipotence.

I was suddenly awakened in the night by a wild roaring and whistling. Springing to my feet I rushed out-of-doors. A peculiar yellow light lay

over all. In the sulphurous sky behind the mountain peaks and above the wooded hills a huge mass of cloud was forming beneath whose weight the trees and grass seemed to bend. The air was full of rattling, crashing sounds, causing the startled hens to flutter from their roosts and the cattle to roar in their stalls. Beams and laths were torn from our roof, and they soared high above us like vultures with long wings. I saw Adam in his night-clothes standing in the doorway; then all at once I was thrown to the ground, pummelled with sticks and stones, as it seemed to me, but when I sprang again to my feet I realised that heavy hailstones were falling about me. I staggered back under the thatched roof of the shed, from which the timbers were being torn and tossed into the air as lightly as apple-blossoms in a May breeze. I was already imprisoned behind a savage network of rain and hail, the streaming threads interweaving themselves into a living lattice. The hailstones beat against the roof and the walls, and some as large as an egg were dashed in pieces. A river, carrying with it beams, wheels, and carts, had destroyed the tool-house and was rushing through the yard. Huge blocks of ice and stone moved toward us and the noise was as deafening as the roar of a waterfall, a conflagration, and a battle all combined. My attempt to run across to the house or to regain my stable failed. So alone amidst the impenetrable forces of nature I awaited the crashing in of the shed roof.

Friend, I never experienced anything like it in all my life, and it is still a dream to me. I was so entirely occupied with what was happening, that while waiting for it to be over my only thought was: Will it not end? Will it never end? The opinions as to how long it lasted vary from twenty-five minutes to an hour.

When the storm had abated the family came out to meet me from the house over the crackling ice. Wild streams of water, earth, and hailstones foamed in deep channels. Remnants of branches and boards were suspended from the trees and walls. The meadows and fields were snow-white, excepting where the dark streams flowed through them. The air was as cold as in winter. A mist hung over the mountains.

Pale as death, my Adam came up to me, saying: "Has nothing happened to thee, Hansel?"

"Are you all safe?" I asked in return, for I did not see Barbel at first. She was standing by the corner of the house like a statue peering out into the wide gleaming winter. Her face was ethereal-ised and transfigured. She was gazing towards the path leading up from Hoisendorf. But no one can traverse it now. The tree-trunks and broken branches lie everywhere obstructing the way.

"Praise God, thank God, the house still stands!" said Adam.

"And the work is also finished," added the house-mother. "This year the harvesting did not take long!"

Not a stalk is left standing on all the four fields. Everything is crushed into the earth and covered with ice. The stooks which we made last evening in such jubilant spirits lie stretched upon the ground like heaps of boiled straw. And when towards noon the ice began to melt in places, the fields looked as if freshly ploughed. The pastures are bare, the cabbage garden is so thickly and smoothly plastered with cabbage leaves that one could dance upon it were it not for the jagged points projecting from the stripped stalks. The vegetables in the potato field have disappeared leaving no trace behind them. If the damage has been as great up on the Alm a serious time is in store for us. Then there would be no more work, but much meat to eat, as all the domestic animals would have to be killed for lack of feed. We can only reach the neighbouring farms by a long circuitous route. Avalanches have descended all about us, and the brown streams of earth extend as far as the ravines, which are thus partly filled, causing the water to form pools and the pools to form lakes, that finally break through the wall of earth by sheer force. Dost thou remember an excursion we took last summer to Kattning? We had a hail-storm then which crushed the grain on the fields. In some such way the trees in the forests here are broken and bent in places, and the trunks are lying about in the greatest confusion.

From Gleimer's and Schragerer's farms we hear complaints, curses, and weeping. Even our housemother began quarrelling with God, but Adam laid

his hand on her arm, saying: "Mother, thou must not talk so! See, that which a man takes hard is harder to bear. To be sure, the grain is destroyed, but we are all alive. Think, if it were the other way!"

"*Mein Gott!*" she cried, "if the storm had killed us all together, then it would at least be over with. Everything that we do seems to be wrong. If we go into the woods for a bit of game it is wrong; if we make a mistake when we love someone it is wrong; and He up there does what He pleases!"

What a flood of blasphemy all at once! Adam stood there looking at her sympathetically. But when her fury was spent she began—to pray humbly.

Thou saidst once, philosopher, that the best remedy for blasphemy was to believe in no God. For to believe in Him and at the same time to acknowledge that He is the source of evil was the greatest blasphemy of all. Very true; nevertheless, he who knows my Adam would change his opinion and would say that under the guidance of Providence nothing evil happens, because to the godly-minded everything evil is turned into good.

Even the cheering news brought that evening from the Alm was unnecessary to convince the housefather of this. Although the roofs had been torn from a number of the huts and the oldest trees had fallen, yet the pastures were uninjured by the hail.

"That is good!" cried the housemother, clapping her hands. "Now we must go to the Alm and

make hay wherever we find it. The turnips and potatoes are unhurt—we shall not starve."

And they slept better that night than for many a preceding one.

The next day the hail-storm threatened to destroy my harvest of this year also. After dinner—to-day we had only dried cabbage and bread soup—the housefather remained sitting at the table, as if it were a holiday. And he requested me to remain with him, for he had something to say to me. What could that mean?

"Tell us, Hansel, what we owe thee. For we can no longer ask thee to stay with us, on account of the change that has just taken place in our fortunes. Thou wilt easily find a better situation. Thou seest how poor we are all at once."

Now, what did this signify? Were they sending me away because there was little work and not much food? Or were they merely giving me the opportunity to go, in case the sorrow in this home should have become too great for me? I let the whole afternoon pass without giving my housefather an answer. I really felt that now less than ever ought I to leave this man alone. So in the evening, as we sat at the top of the watering-trough sadly gazing out over the landscape, which was as quiet and peaceful as a churchyard, I said:

"Father, I should dislike to go away. And now there is even more work to do than a few days ago. Look at the roofs! The next rain will leak into the house. The windows! The wind will draw through.

The roads and the paths! Why, no one can get around. I am able to do something. If it is on account of the food—that which is good enough for the others will be good enough for me." It was hard for me to stammer the last words.

"It is very kind of thee, Hansel," said Adam, holding out his hand.

Next came the appraising of the crops. Two gentlemen arrived, sent from the trader who had bought the grain on the field. They went about everywhere, and as they saw the ruin, they expressed their sympathy for the poor injured buyer. He had paid a sum in advance and now there was no security for it. Then they also expressed their Christian sympathy for Adam.

"And do we get nothing?" cried the housemother.

The gentlemen shrugged their shoulders.

"But that is enough to make one despair!" she lamented.

Adam turned away. "Hast thou nothing to say, then?" she called to him. He was silent.

"The gain to others, the damage to us!" she said.

Then Adam murmured: "If one only had no greater misfortune than that . . ."

Thirty-third Sunday.

Now, dear friend, thou shalt hear how it happened. Since the storm the spring which supplies the house with water had been out of order. Earth

had washed into the gutter at the source in the grove and filled the pipe. So Adam and I set to work repairing it. He carried up a roll of iron wire one hundred and fifty feet long, unrolled it and commenced to insert it in the stopped-up pipe.

"Thank God," he said, "that the spring is not destroyed. As long as we have water, we shall not lose courage."

"And contentment which cannot be destroyed is still better than water," I replied. "I think God ought to grant thee the greatest happiness as a reward for thy patience."

"I think," he answered pleasantly, "that He should bestow happiness upon those who cannot bear misfortune. If the children are only good everything else can be borne."

We were conversing thus, when the housemother called from the house: "Father, come in for a moment! Someone is here."

Adam stood still a while as if wondering who it could be. Then dropping the wire from his hand he descended slowly towards the house. I did not remain long alone at my task. Rocherl soon joined me, stumbling over the wire, which he angrily tore from the pipe.

"What art thou doing, Rocherl?"

"We don't need any water!" he snarled; "let them all go thirsty! He has come!"

"Who? The corn dealer?" I asked.

"That Winter! The schoolmaster!"

"The schoolmaster is there? Well, that cannot be anything very bad."

"Of course, thou knowest all about it!" he said jeeringly. "Nothing bad, when he wants to take Barbel away from us, after getting her into trouble!"

"But, man, that is good! That is just as it should be."

"I won't stand it! I won't stand it!" he cried, gnashing his teeth in his excitement.

"Be glad that he is an honourable enough fellow to marry her."

"Curse it! Curse it! Curse it!" With a wild gesture as if reaching out after a weapon he seized the wire and broke it.

"I do not understand thee, Rocherl! Be at least thankful that something cheerful is about to happen. Thou knowest well that thy poor sister needs nothing quite so much as a wedding-day."

"Oh, yes, since he has managed things so that there is no other escape for her. Otherwise she would not do it, as she does not care for him—never has!"

"Dost thou not see how much she loves him?"

"What! That shock-head! That pitted shock-head!"

"Oh, well, if there is nothing worse than the smallpox pits, then there is little to worry about."

At which he fairly screamed at me: "Thou art not one whit better thyself, if thou takest his part in this way!"

"Why, of course not. Who is any better? Don't

be foolish, Rocherl. See, thou hast broken the wire and what shall we do now with the stopped-up pipe?"

He said no more but leaned sadly against a tree. A few moments later the call for dinner was sounded. As I entered the house the teacher was still standing by the hearth, and from his twitching features I could see that something had gone wrong. Barbel was not present, she was in her own room. After the blessing had been asked the rest of us took our places as usual. The housefather said, shoving a plated spoon—the best one reserved for guests—across the table:

"I hope the schoolmaster will not refuse us the honour of taking a spoonful with us. After climbing so far one needs something warm."

The teacher, stepping forward, replied: "Really, I could not eat a mouthful now!" Even the words seemed to choke him.

"As you please; we are going to eat our dinner," said Adam, cutting bread into the soup.

Herr Winter turned a little towards me: "Hans also knows why I am here. It is no secret that I have asked for Barbel, the daughter of the house, to be my wife."

Adam pushed the loaf of bread aside, laid down the knife, and with shaking voice, said: "Do not torment me so, dear people. I appreciate the honour done our daughter by the offer of such a marriage. But she is too young, altogether too young. Is it not so, mother, it is too soon?"

His appeal to the housemother was unfortunate.

"Too young?" she said, "that is no objection. People grow older. Younger girls than she have married. And that they care for each other is evident, alas! too evident."

The housefather had seated himself upon a bench and folded his hands; it was apparent that he breathed with difficulty as he said, "How hard it is to give away one's child all at once . . ."

His wife left the hearth, went over to the table, and sitting down beside him said almost tenderly: "There is nothing else for us to do, Adam. It is necessary. The few weeks left her will soon be over. If they marry now it can be all straightened out in time."

Adam looked at his wife, then at the teacher, then again at his wife. His face was strangely altered, but in a kind, though hoarse voice, he said: "Well, well! Then it is true after all! I would not believe it—I would not believe it! Barbel—my Barbel! Later, of course . . ."

And the housemother turned with a pleased expression towards the teacher: "Later it will be all right. Go, Franzel, call the girl. The silly thing must come out here. The time for being ashamed has long since passed. She should thank God that it ends in this way. But won't you sit down at the table, sir? You must make yourself at home now, and not despise a peasant's meal. . . . Oh, what is the matter with father? *Jesus Maria!* What is the matter with father?"

Our housefather was leaning back in the corner and there was a rattling sound in his throat.

What shall I say to thee, Alfred? It was all over in a few moments. That was yesterday, the fourteenth of August.

Thirty-fourth Sunday.

What a weight of sorrow and trouble in this home! With one stroke I was given the chief place as if I were housefather and brother. They all leaned upon me and wept. They all looked to me for advice as to what to do next. How frivolous were the motives which brought me to this house and what serious duties were awaiting me here! If the sacred burdens of this class and my pity for the endurance of these people had not already clarified my vision, how could I have lived through these days? The father dead, the daughter betrayed, one son with his crippled hand, the other, a runaway soldier, and last of all the wreck of the fortunes of the entire household!

In the night, as confused and helpless I sat in my room, an idea came to me for which I should have liked to flog myself as I would flog a cowardly dog. What was keeping me in this house of sorrow? Why not take my staff and depart? In the lower valley the peasants are in need of farmhands. Temptation of the devil! Who still remembers the foolish wager? My place is here and nowhere else. And I will see now if out of the good-for-nothing of former days a true man may not be developed.

Only I must be allowed to write to thee, Alfred, and thou must not refuse to help me with a good word from time to time. Then I will try and perform that which is at present required of me. Now listen to the further events in Adamshaus.

When, during that midday meal, our Adam left us, I could hardly believe it at first. This man with whom I had worked just an hour before up by the spring, who had talked to me as one man talks to another—was now leaning back in the corner, pale, cold, and stiff. We called him by name, we sprinkled him with cold water, we shook his body —but death had conquered. The housemother seemed to think that certain remedies might still avail. She called upon the saints, she arranged refreshments for Adam to take when he should awake, she spoke tender words to him, she made vows and invoked the blessing for the dead. "But, father, what is it? To be so ill all of a sudden! Only wait a bit, the cold water will bring thee to life again. It is curious, the way it has attacked thee to-day. Thou hast not had such a bad turn for a long time. Our Beloved Lady will make thee all right. O help him just once more, dearest Mother of God! I will fast at Christmas and at Easter for thy glory! I will only sleep five hours at night—if thou wilt but wake him once more, our Beloved Lady!"

Not another breath did he draw; his glassy eyes stared vacantly into space. Then the woman sank upon her knees.

"Crucified Saviour, have mercy upon him!" and

she screamed: "Adam! Adam! Thou wilt leave me without saying good-bye? My husband, my dear husband! Adam!" Then collapsing entirely, she moaned: "It is all over!"

But as the sound of weeping arose in the room, she sprang to her feet, crying: "Be quiet! Or we shall have another misfortune!"

Franzel, who had been sent to call Barbel, was still standing by the door. Now the mother herself went out to her. "Thou art right," she said to the girl, "thou art right to stay in thy chamber. Something has happened in the other room. Thy father will not consent. But think nothing of it, he will give in, when the storm is over. Thou knowest him. But now he has the asthma again. It will be wiser for thee to keep out of the way for a while."

Quite a preposterous falsehood, but thou canst understand why the girl should have been spared the sudden shock. The teacher tore open Adam's shirt and held his ear to the heart—to the quiet heart. Taking his hand, I said: "Guido, come, thou hast something else to do at present. Go to her. Take her out to walk across the fields and prepare her mind gradually."

With a despairing gesture, he replied: "I am to blame for it all!"

"But now thou must be strong! I tell thee, go to her. She never needed thy help more than in this hour." Then he left the house and soon the two crossed the yard and went out into the fields.

After laying the dead man upon the bench, we held a sad consultation as to what was next to be done. Franzel was sent for old Marenzel to come and prepare the body for burial. The little fellow hastened away at once. He has not yet had experience enough to realise that the dead can never return to us! Rocherl was despatched to Kailing with a telegram for Valentin in Laibach and to get necessaries for the funeral. I went down to Hoisendorf to arrange with the priest and the grave-digger. I caused the greatest excitement everywhere with my news; only the priest received it unmoved, like an everyday occurrence. He is accustomed to death — for other people. When the bells were ordered to be tolled, the schoolmaster, whose duty it is to attend to this, was not to be found. But I did not like to tell them where he was, or that he was out courting a wife. So the blacksmith and I took hold of the bell-ropes, I pulling one with each hand, and we tolled the bells, which seemed to say: "Pray! Pray! A fellow creature has departed!" The apprentice explained to me: "If it is a man, the big bell must be rung a few times at the end; if a woman, the small one. And by this the people know."

In regard to the grave-digger I had some difficulty —for there is none. One has to go from house to house and ask for hands—there is a regular form: "Who out of Christian charity will prepare the earth-bed for their departed fellow-parishioner where he may take his everlasting rest?" I finally secured

three men. I worked with them, my dear Alfred, and with shovel and hoe we prepared as comfortable a bed for my housefather as anyone could have. The carpenter, Martin, who is to make the coffin, said that he would take the measure on himself, for he and Adam were the same height.

On the way home in the twilight I met Rocherl returning from Kailing. He had a package of wheat flour, compressed yeast, tapers, and a white linen cloth cover for the coffin. As we were climbing the steep mountain behind one another, I was reminded of that first day when yonder under the larch-tree I found an exhausted man sitting on a bag of meal.

"Now he will know about it," said Rocherl.

"What heaven is like, thou meanest?"

The lad started, then repeated: "Now he will know about it,—Valentin."

I wonder if Barbel knows yet, I thought to myself. The schoolmaster must be up there still, for I have not met him coming down.

"If he can only get a leave of absence!" remarked Rocherl.

"That is doubtful," I replied. "If they are having marches it will be quite impossible. Besides, he could hardly arrive in time, as the funeral is to be early in the morning day after to-morrow."

Rocherl then told me how disagreeable the shopkeeper at Kailing had been when he tied up his bundle and found that he was not to get his pay to-day.

"But thy mother gave thee money!" I reminded him.

"Yes," he said, "that which was her dowry when father married her. On the way it occurred to me, what use would a furlough be to Valentin if he had no money to come home with. So I telegraphed the money to him."

"That was not wise," I replied. "Thou knowest that I always have a little money." To be frank with thee, though, Alfred, I have not much. The capital I brought with me from the city, augmented by pawning my watch and ring and other things, brings in but little interest here. I have about twenty-five *Gulden* to last until New Year's. However, the birds in the trees sing: "Do not worry about to-morrow!"

It had grown dark, but the clouds were still edged with the rose tints of the afterglow. All was at peace and if the path had not been full of holes and the branches of the trees so broken, we could have almost forgotten how furious this quiet nature can sometimes become.

We did not speak of the dead father, but Rocherl turned around once more and said: "Now thou wilt believe it, Hansel!"

"Believe what?"

"That this man is our misfortune."

I made no reply. At last we approached the house. It stood there, a dark mass, a red gleam shining from two windows. Rocherl stopped. I told him that he ought to go in at once to his

mother and sister. But he remained standing and suddenly began to weep bitterly. He knew very well that yonder where the lights were burning stood the bier. As we opened the door, instead of the peace of death, we found a confusion of women. The schoolmaster came out to us, saying: "We have a new trouble. No one has ever been punished as I have been. . . ." Rocherl rushed into the house as if mad.

"What has happened now?" I said.

"Barbel. . . ."

I cannot write more to-night. We do not yet know whether or not she will live.

Thirty-fifth Sunday.

Thy letter, my dear friend, has given me renewed courage. Many thanks for it. The compass of thy clear intellect affords me a feeling of greater security and strength for that which I must do.

Now thou shalt hear more about the poor girl. A week ago I wrote thee how at the hour of her father's death, the schoolmaster took her out-of-doors to prepare her mind for the sad news. At first he told her that before God and her parents they were now bride and groom. Then, that he would be her friend in every joy and in every sorrow as long as he lived.

"But father will not consent," she replied.

"Most certainly he will," insisted the teacher. "He may have been excited at first, but who could blame him for that? Or for being unwilling to give

thee up? But he must know to whom thou belongest now."

"It would be all right," she said, "if I did not have the feeling, Guido, that thou hast asked for my hand only because it is necessary."

"What dost thou mean by that?"

"I wonder whether thou really carest for me."

"Thou shouldst not harbour such thoughts as these, Barbel. Thou knowest what I have told thee."

Then they wandered for a long time over the fields and meadows, now the scene of so much ruin. They discussed many things, how they would lead their life together and arrange for their new home. And the girl became quite cheerful. Suddenly she stopped and asked: "Why are they ringing the bells at Hoisendorf?"

"To-morrow will be Ascension Day," he answered.

"But it is not time for the holiday yet," she replied.

"Perhaps someone is already celebrating," he suggested.

Then she thought: "It is possible that somebody has died." She made the sign of the cross upon her white face with her thumb and prayed a silent paternoster. The teacher reflected: "Poor, good child, thou art praying for thy father and dost not know it."

"Thou shouldst be at home, Guido, when the bells are rung."

"The blacksmith will ring them."

"We have not heard of anyone being ill."

And the teacher said: "There are a number of delicate people in the neighbourhood. For instance, there is old Gleimer. He is so short of breath, they say, and besides he has heart trouble. No one is safe for a single hour."

"It must be very hard," she murmured softly, "to lose someone whom one loves."

"Thou art right; it always hurts when it strikes. But no one escapes at last, and it is better for children to close their parents' eyes than the other way."

As he was talking thus, Barbel began to grow uneasy. And suddenly she said: "I will go home now."

"Oh, there is time enough, sweetheart. Give me this beautiful day." Taking her hand, he added: "See how the grass on the ruined meadow is becoming green again."

"Let me go, Guido! I want to go home to father!" She tore herself away from him so quickly and hastened over the field so rapidly that he was obliged to run to catch up with her at the door of the house.

"Barbel, I want to tell thee something; thou must not go in now. Think for what thou art responsible. Think of that, Barbel! Let me tell thee first. Thy father—he is very ill . . ."

Pushing him back violently she rushed into the house. Then she gave one terrific scream and, falling across the body of the dead man, she shook

it, calling frantically into the ghastly face that he should wake up and look at her. But when she was finally convinced of the truth, a numbness and quiet came over her which fairly made one shudder. Dry-eyed and speechless she staggered to her room.

When a little later the housemother heard a groan she suspected what was happening. Old Marenzel, who had come to prepare the dead man for burial, had another occupation now. When Rocherl and I returned in the evening, two of Adam's household were lying on the bier—the oldest and the youngest.

Thus, my Alfred, has it happened. And there was such gloomy mourning in the house that I longed to hear someone grumble at this horrible fate, or cry out in angry revolt, to counteract this melancholy, agonising grief! Everyone, even the usually sharp-tongued housemother, stood about or walked softly as if in a dream. During the night Barbel began to ask: "Tell me how it all happened!" And early in the morning she asked again: "How did my father die?"

Since none of the others could trust themselves to speak, I came forward and resolutely entered her little room. Summoning all my courage, I said:

"Barbel, it was a happy death. When he learned that the schoolmaster was asking for thy hand honourably, he raised both arms as if in blessing and cried: 'Then my beloved child will be happy! Thank God!' With these words he sank back against the wall and—it was all over."

"And he was not angry?" she asked, "not angry?"

"Yes, of course he was angry at first, because the schoolmaster came so late—so very late."

She said nothing in reply. But after a little she murmured softly to herself: "If that is the way it was! If that is the way it was!" And she wept, but in quite a different manner from before.

Thou must absolve me from this lie, Alfred. Well meant deceit, which delivers a soul from purgatory, that surely cannot be wrong! But now at night when I am unable to sleep, it strikes me differently. It was indeed atrocious to deceive a child about her father's death! For did she not bring the sorrow to her family? Should she not bear the whole burden of her great sin? I beg of thee, friend, to say, "No." Say, thou faithful seeker after truth and goodness, say rather, that it is right to deceive when good will come of it. Do not say those dreadful words: "Truth above all, even when human happiness and human hearts are wrecked by it." I implore thee, philosopher, make thy philosophy such that this earthly life may be peaceful and warm. Let it be dark, if it must, but let it be rich in love. See, the poor girl smiles to-day through happy tears. The naked truth would have plunged her into life-long misery and woe.

Next Sunday I will tell thee what has happened further during these days.

Thirty-sixth Sunday.

On the surface it seems at times as if the peasants troubled themselves little about each other. Yet

if something unusual occurs in any of their homes, their human sympathy is extended from all sides, and they become as one family, both young and old.

During the two nights that our housefather lay on the long bier, the large room could scarcely hold all who came to comfort and to pray. A few of the women brought butter, white bread, and dried cherries, that Adam's wife might have the wherewithal to prepare a worthy funeral feast. I shall not enter into a minute description of the funeral customs, for they are innumerable and they possess a meaning only for those who can comprehend them. For instance: During the days that a dead body is lying in the house, no menial work is allowed to be done; the clock must remain unwound; the twigs used to sprinkle holy water on the corpse must grow in the form of a cross; the straw bed on which the departed spent his last night alive must be burned out-of-doors; his cane is carried out and tied to an old tree to keep it from wandering about alone to the neighbours' houses. Wherever such a stick raps on the door, it is a sign that one of the occupants will soon die.

In the house of mourning the people of the neighbourhood assemble at night and sit about on the benches and at the tables, praying the psalter, singing hymns, eating white bread and cream, and discussing various topics. These wakes are often very cheerful. The young people amuse themselves with gymnastics and pranks, and sometimes even with the corpse itself, according to an ancient

custom. And then, too, they joke about death; it fails to inspire them with awe. In our Adamshaus, however, there was no sign of anything but the deepest melancholy, and the effect of the funeral hymns, inartistically chanted by the men and women, can only be felt, it cannot be described.

The body was covered with a white linen cloth. On entering, many of the people lifted this cloth from the head, and, gazing into Adam's pale face, said to him: "God give thee everlasting peace. If I have ever offended thee, forgive me!"

It may be that when standing beside the bier of a beloved fellow-being, one feels pity for him for the first time, not because he has died, but because he has lived. Lived and suffered and secretly and patiently borne many a heavy burden alone. The hunter, Konrad, spoke thus to Adam. The housemother, hearing him, made an expressive gesture as if she would say: "Never mind all that! Thou shouldst not have done him the injury in the first place!"

In the arm-chair near the bier stood the wooden crucifix, taken down from the shrine, and beside it a glass containing burning oil and a small vase of holy water, holding the twig with which from time to time the dead man was sprinkled. At the foot of the bier, back in the corner of the room, lay a little body, also covered with a white cloth. The people pretended not to notice it and no one inquired for Barbel.

During the second night two girls arrived greatly

excited and distressed. They had a weird story to relate. As they were walking through the grove they had seen Adam standing by the spring near a crabapple-tree. He was resting on a spade as if he had been digging and had grown weary at his task. They did not know how they ever got here, they were so terrified.

"We all wish him everlasting rest!" said an old man.

Then Kulmbock, who was sitting by a table, cried: "Do not be silly, women folks! So you think it was a ghost! I cannot swallow that! There are no such things as ghosts. And I ought to know, if anyone!" Kulmbock now belongs to the enlightened. Since he has been elected to the *Landtag* he is pushed to the fore, given the place of honour and made manager of everything. So he has undertaken the direction of the funeral. He is developing a great gift for talking, which, however, has not yet been made use of in the *Landtag*. There the clever man wishes to hear first what the others have to say. His buxom daughter was also present on this night. She did not make herself conspicuous, but kept back in the chimney-corner with the other young people, jesting on the sly. As Rocherl went over to them with a loaf of bread and a knife and asked the young men to help themselves, Kulmbock's daughter said mischievously: "Oh, yes, Rocherl, I should like to have thee give me a slice of bread. Cut me off one, and a good big one, too."

"That would be a work of art," jeered one of the young men. "Thou canst eat bread with one mouth but canst hardly cut it with one hand."

To this Rocherl replied sharply: "Thou wouldst not dare to nag me with thy one mouth if I had two sound hands!"

"Go away!" pouted Kulmbock's daughter, pushing the youth off with her elbow, "I won't let anything happen to Rocherl!"

"She thinks perhaps that a one-handed man can make love as well as any other!" retorted her companion.

Rocherl ground his teeth, plunged the knife into the loaf and left the house. I had been watching this scene and I realised more than ever the magnitude of the poor boy's trial. Any rogue can jeer at him to his heart's content without fear of retribution. But they ought not to make fun of him as they do. If they knew him better they would not. He can carry more dangerous weapons with his one hand than they with their two!

Now I will tell thee of another incident. Towards midnight, as we were all kneeling at the tables, which had been placed in the room, we heard a commotion outside before the door. There were short exclamations, then broken sentences and smothered sobs. Out of the darkness appeared a figure resembling Adam, only younger and more vigorous, wearing a soldier's cap and cloak. Valentin! On his leave of absence! He was a young man with high cheek-bones and a thin face. He

shook hands with everyone, treating his mother like all the rest, gazed about him with a restless, confused glance, then walked slowly and hesitatingly towards the bier. A woman removed the cloth from the face and whispered: "See, he is quite unchanged and looks as if he were asleep. He is resting well."

Valentin knelt awkwardly on the praying-bench, folded his hands, and fixed his eyes on the dead man. Then he rose and staggered against the tall clock, by which the unpainted pine coffin was standing. From the trembling and shaking of his body it was apparent how affected he was.

We city-bred people are not familiar with diffidence in sorrow, any more than we are familiar with diffidence in joy or in the love between parents and children. The son coming from afar does not kiss his mother, does not touch with his finger-tips the dead body of his father; I heard no word of tenderness or of mourning fall from his lips—but afterwards outside in the dark shed, he groaned like a wounded deer.

Later, Valentin, heavy-hearted and taciturn, stood in the open doorway with his brother, and as they were gazing out into the moonlit night Rocherl pointed to a figure sitting on the watering-trough and said: "Dost thou see him, Valentin? Over there on the trough? He is the unhappiest of all!"

Then the mother came out to them from the hearth, where a meal was cooking over a crackling fire, and asked Valentin to sit down and eat

something. The soldier shook his head, saying that he could eat nothing. They gathered together in the shed and the mother told her newly arrived son how everything had happened. When she spoke of the man who had brought this trouble upon Barbel, Valentin's hand involuntarily reached for his knife.

"But now he is going to marry her," said the mother.

And the soldier replied: "That is his good fortune."

"Thou callest it his good fortune?" demanded Rocherl. "And thou thinkest that that makes everything all right?"

"But he cannot do more."

"Valentin," said Rocherl, in great agitation, "I can do nothing with my one hand, otherwise — otherwise I should not have waited for thee. Now thou must demand satisfaction from him."

"From whom? From the schoolmaster? When he is going to marry her!"

"But her reputation! Her reputation!"

"Why art thou so excited, brother Rocherl? It is a misfortune which might happen to anyone."

"And thou sayest that?" cried Rocherl in amazement. "Thou art grown so bad as that!"

In reply the soldier said: "My dear fellow, thou shouldst only know how things are out in the world."

After this conversation between the two brothers in the moonlight before the house, Valentin asked to see his sister.

"She is sleeping now," said the mother. "Let her rest, she has suffered much."

"I do not know how long a time I have," answered the soldier. Then, re-entering the house he crossed over to the fire-place. The people moved closer together at the table to make room for him. But he still kept in the background and whenever the door opened his eyes turned quickly in that direction.

Now I came forward and introduced myself as Hansel, the farmhand.

"I know it," he answered shortly.

"How are things going with the regiment? And how is Commander Marx?"

"Thou knowest him?" he asked.

"He was my captain."

"Didst thou serve in the Twenty-Seventh also?"

"Your obedient servant."

After learning this he tried to withdraw. I noticed his uneasiness, which seemed to be increasing.

"Was the leave of absence difficult to obtain?"

"Very easy," he said.

"How long a time hast thou?"

"An indefinite time."

"Oh, indeed!" I replied, "I am surprised at that." Just as I was about to ask him another question he turned hastily and left the house.

Thirty-seventh Sunday.

I have been writing on this letter for weeks. Thou wishest me to give thee every detail. How

can I do that when such a variety of things happen all at once, and when there is so much else to do and to think about besides writing a story, which, it is true, is constantly repeating itself in the world, but is, nevertheless, fearfully new and strange to the one experiencing it?

As I was conversing with Valentin, he left me abruptly. I followed him until he slipped into the little outhouse where the straw is kept, and here he could escape me no longer. He cowered on a truss in a corner, burying his face in the straw.

"Valentin," I said, "I stand on such a footing with thy family now that there can be perfect confidence between us. Confess to me frankly, thou hast deserted."

Neither denying nor affirming it, he replied: "When the news came I asked the captain for a leave of four days. 'If each man had a leave whenever one of the family died at home,' he answered, 'then we should have half the regiment with the mourning women.'"

"So thou hast run away unnoticed?"

"But I am going straight back to-morrow when it is all over."

"Valentin," I said, "thou hast seen thy father once more. We will bury him with every honour. Thou wouldst better go at once."

He shook his head. He did not wish to go at once. So the unhappy man stayed, but not one of all those who attended the funeral had a suspicion that a deserter was among them when they laid the

dead Adam in his coffin. While the people were still sitting around the table at the funeral feast talking in subdued voices the carpenter nailed on the cover. Confound it all! What a noise it made! The housemother closed the doors and windows, so that Barbel should not hear it in her room.

Then they carried the coffin out and set it on the door-sill. Here they chanted a mournful hymn, in which the departing soul takes its leave of wife and child, of house and land. At the same moment the windmill, that stood opposite the girl's window, began to clatter with a great noise. The people looked up in indignation. Kulmbock was much annoyed at this disturbance of the service, but it gives me profound pleasure to announce the conversion of a certain person. Saufüssel — is well again and saved! He who at that Easter fire had tried to throw Rocherl into the flames and who had placed the scarecrow under Barbel's window. And now this same Saufüssel was driving the windmill, having first inserted splinters to make it clatter more loudly. It seems that his mother, old Marenzel, had put him up to it. "Remember, boy, how good Barbel was to thee, how she let thee out of the hut, and came to thee when thou wast ill! I have already begged Kulmbock not to sing that mournful hymn before the door. But he will not listen to me, the numskull! Now go, my lad, and turn the windmill until it clatters so that the sick girl cannot hear the chanting in her room." The ancient rite was interrupted, but the girl was spared

the heartbreaking parting hymn. I am more pleased with this Saufüssel now than with all the affecting funeral customs together. Barbel has accomplished this. Out of these two people she has made human beings.

The man who was slinking around the house, feeling as if he belonged there and yet did not, was Guido Winter. With the exception of Rocherl, no one had told him that he alone was to blame for all this trouble, but he repeated it to himself continuously and mercilessly. Barbel wished to know where Guido was and she sent for him to come to her. And this wonderful creature—while her father, her youth, her innocence, and her tender happiness were being taken from her—soothed this man with gentle words of encouragement and comfort, telling him that if anyone were to blame for these misfortunes, it was she herself. And she had always hoped that he would not desert her when the hard time came, though if what other people said of him were true, then indeed she would have despaired. She had now passed through her greatest trial, nothing so sad could ever happen again, and even though they must live in poverty and want, she would be satisfied with everything if he would only love her a little.

Thus she talked to him, for he told me everything afterwards. And in the midst of all these sacred revelations the atrociously secular thought occurred to me: Now if they were only here, the twenty thousand *Kronen!* How I should like to

play the *rôle* of rich uncle, just to be able to outwit the devil in his plans!

Friend, how brave she was—thou wouldst call it a true *sursum corda!* It gives one a sudden feeling of exaltation in these days of mourning.

Six of us men carried my Adam down through the stony gorge. The coffin was firmly bound to poles with straps, and yet it threatened to slip on account of the steepness and crookedness of the path. Behind the coffin walked a young man, with red ribbons on his hat and sleeve, dressed as if for a wedding. On his outstretched arm, as one would carry a child, he bore the tiny casket wrapped in white linen. Rocherl had been chosen to perform the service of carrying this curious treasure casket to the churchyard, but he made a horrible outcry at the suggestion and disappeared into the woods. He was not present at the burial. Behind the young man in wedding apparel walked old Marenzel, in one hand her cane, in the other the stable lantern. The morning sun reflected so brightly in the glass of the lantern that the lighted candle within was not apparent until we entered the shady gorge. Then followed a number of men and women praying. There was at least one representative from each house in Almgai.

The housemother in her dark blue gown, Valentin wrapped in his military cloak, and little Franzel in his green-bordered Styrian coat, were in the procession praying like the rest. Since the mourning

was a general one the family gave no sign of feeling it more deeply than the others.

Kulmbock had formerly been the one to lead the prayers on these occasions, but now, since he had become deputy and director, he was obliged to think more of making speeches than of praying. So the tailor, Setznagel, with his high-pitched, sing-song voice, was chosen to act as substitute. At the very end of the procession trotted the old couple, Michelmensch. These two paupers are always on hand wherever a funeral feast is going on, and they have surely accompanied more people to their graves than are still living on these rocky heights. Last of all came the dog, Bismarck, running. He was constantly chased back, yet he returned as constantly to escort his housefather on his last journey. When, however, he finally realised that his sympathy was not wanted, with tail between his legs he slunk home to Adamshaus, where he remained standing before the silent dwelling, whining loudly.

A neighbour stayed with Barbel and read aloud to her from an old prayer-book, "The Holy Way of the Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." I wonder if the heart of the poor girl was on this "Way of the Cross" or upon one of her own.

As we entered the church, before the door of which the coffin had been placed, we beheld a grinning skull from the charnel-house lying upon the altar as decoration. Who knows but what it may have been one of Adam's forefathers, now acting as guard of honour over the funeral service? The

benches were filled with worshippers and in front of each one stood a lighted candle. Valentin was far back in the archway under the tower, anxiously looking towards the door every time it opened.

After the service we carried Adam to his grave. As with the aid of two long straps we were lowering the coffin, it struck the sides of the grave with a thud, almost drowning the sound of the weeping voices. The bells were ringing loudly, the priest was praying the requiem, while the choir-boy swung the censer, from which a blue cloud of smoke rose among the lilac-trees in the meadow. The house-mother stood there motionless as a statue, gazing fixedly at the crucifix. The schoolmaster I hoped was with Barbel.

Lowering a ladder into the grave, I descended to set the coffin straight, so that my Adam might rest comfortably. Then the young man in wedding apparel handed down the little casket, but as I was about to lay it beside our housefather, the priest interrupted the prayer with the question: "Has the child been baptised?"

"*Mein Gott*, surely," answered old Marenzel.

"But while it was still alive?" he asked.

"Worthy sir, it never was alive. It came into the world as it now is."

"Then it does not belong here," said the priest, and his usually good-natured face grew troubled. "Outside by the hedgerow is the field where it may lie. I will gladly bless it, only you ought to know that a child born in sin, which is not redeemed by

holy baptism, has no place in consecrated ground. And in this case most assuredly not, alas!''

As the people comprehended that the priest was refusing burial to the little child, a great commotion arose. The schoolmaster, who had not been seen during the service, suddenly appeared. Snatching the tiny casket from the young man, he said, in a loud, distinct voice: ''It is mine! I will bury it in my garden and place a stone at its head with the inscription: 'Here rests a child born in sin, who has not been redeemed by Christ's blood!' ''

It fairly made one shudder to hear him. The people held their breath, wondering what would happen next. The priest looked at them sadly, shook his head, and finally said to the young man: ''Put it in.''

And that was all. We laid it at Adam's feet and covered it with the blessed earth.

When it was over the peasant Gleimer and his wife pushed their way through the crowd, and placing themselves beside the grave, began to chant. He, with a rough, rattling voice and she in a shrill soprano, both following the melody as if sung by one voice. Had city people been present they would have bitten their tongues until they bled or have laughed ill-manneredly. But I felt no inclination to laugh; this horrible singing, full of faith and devoutness, not only went to my marrow, it reached to my very heart. Especially when at the close, the whole parish joined in a solemn funeral chorus. The melody, in a sustained minor key, I

felt as if I must have already heard before in long-past ages, perhaps at the time of the Niebelungen, or at a feast of Odin under the German oak-trees. Christianity had furnished the text, and the pathos was that of the modern world. I can give thee the words, but they have no soul when unaccompanied by the tones of those weeping and heroic voices rising to heaven. This is what they sang by the grave for the soul of my Adam:

"Away, O soul, unto thy God,
Who thee from naught created,
And hath redeemed thee by His death,
And for thy coming waited.
Away to Him, who at the font
A pure heart thee hath given!
In mercy may He lift thee up
To the better life of heaven!"

And the parting lines were:

"When in the fire of that last day,
Earth is destroyed for ever,
So pray to God that we may stand
At His right hand together!"

Canst thou realise that these people, who are our contemporaries in the *fin de siècle*, firmly believe in the literal resurrection of the dead? What do I say, —believe? They are convinced of it. It is entirely a matter of course to them, as certain and natural as that night follows day. There is not the shadow

of a doubt in their minds but what the dead whom they bury in the churchyard, when wakened by the trumpet-call of the angel on the Day of Judgment, will rise again; rise with their earthly bodies and in the garments they wore when laid in the grave; that they will come out of the ground alive, the same soul again united with the rejuvenated body for the everlasting life. And yet these very people, believing all this, after a certain number of years open the old graves and scatter the bones, having closely observed how nature destroys, changes, and renews. To the known forces of nature they add omnipotence and everything is clear to them.

Is there not an awful grandeur about this? Has fantasy, to say nothing of reason, ever created anything similarly uplifting for our thirsting, longing hearts? And this is why one never hears these mourners crying in despair by their dark graves, or fainting under the weight of their sorrow. For in a little while will come the reunion and the better life. "From the tree came death; from the cross came life." This motto is inscribed over the entrance of the Hoisendorf churchyard.

But I had not much time to harbour such thoughts as these. While I was still shovelling, I fancied that I saw something gleaming between the hedgerow and the graveyard fence—an uncanny kind of gleaming. My Valentin was standing under the lilac-tree looking down into the grave, where the white pine coffin was fast disappearing from sight beneath the earth.

After the burial Kulmbock mounted a praying-bench and raising his voice made the following speech:

"Now that we have laid our Christian brother into the earth, I will say in the name of his survivors to all present: God bless you for coming with us and praying for the poor soul! And the family invites those who so desire to enter the inn, where a simple repast will be served, that the mourning may be changed into rejoicing. Praised be Jesus Christ!"

"He can talk, though!" said the people approvingly. "He can talk well. And think, how many beautiful things he has already said to-day; especially that last!"

I did not see much of the rejoicing into which the mourning was to be changed. As the people were dispersing, two officers quickly entered the churchyard gate. Valentin, seeing them, gave one hoarse cry, started to run, first to the right, then to the left, and finally sprang into the partly filled grave. He tried to bury himself in the loose earth to escape the bailiffs, who would now drag him to the barracks, to prison, and to who knows what still worse fate. He cowered in the grave, wringing his hands and pleading with us: "Cover me with earth, so that they will not find me!" But they were already there, surrounding the grave with their bayonets. The schoolmaster and I had all that we could do to drag the insane lad out of his hiding-place. One of the officers, with a savage gesture, shouted: "Now we 've got you. Forward march!" But the harsh

tone of the command failed in its effect—it sounded too uncertain, too yielding; and the man made no further effort, but said good-naturedly: "Don't be foolish, Weiler."

Then he gave himself up without more ado. His mother and Franzel stood rooted to the spot in their fright. Turning to the officers, I said: "The gentlemen will surely take dinner first at the inn." And to this they readily consented.

While the people were devouring the funeral feast of bread and cider, which in some produced a mood of blissful melancholy, in others one of boisterous mirth, the officers sat at a well covered table in the neighbouring room, and Valentin, his arms crossed before him, leaned back in a corner, gazing absently into space. We secretly hoped that the wine we had placed before him would arouse him, but he sat motionless, only occasionally groaning into his moustache.

In the meantime, Kulmbock, the teacher, and I were not idle. In the schoolhouse we drew up a petition in which we made a chief point of the fact that Valentin Weiler, according to all appearances, had not meant to desert, but his filial love had played him a trick, and that he had expressed to several people his positive intention of returning immediately after his father's burial. The deeply afflicted family begged for mercy and that this thoughtless step might be dealt with gently. These insertions of Kulmbock's were not bad, yet I should have preferred a more military form. At last we

agreed that when Valentin returned he should go directly to his chief and humbly ask for his punishment.

When the meal was over and the officers rose and started to lead the young man away, bound like a criminal, the mother's heart overflowed. Not in feeble complaints, which would have been inconsistent with my housemother's character, but in angry resentment against their brutal manner of driving a poor, good child from his father's grave, like a thief or an incendiary. And if a soldier might no longer be enough of a human being to visit his parents in the hour of their death, then it mattered little whether we had a fatherland or not, and the Russians might as well come and destroy us all!

She spoke sharply, my housemother, but it did no harm. One of the officers said to the other: "I believe his handcuffs hurt the old woman. I think we might free his hands."

And the other replied: "If thou darest. I shall follow the regulations."

"Then I must also."

"Gentlemen," I said to them, "I 'll wager you, too, have had an old father and mother."

"He shall suffer no harm from us," answered one of them. And they were very humane with him, although they did not unbind him.

As Valentin, thus bound, marched by a group of peasant lads, who stood there in amazement, he called out loudly: "Farewell! The bullet is already cast for me! Hurrah!"

When his mother heard this shout, she became speechless and deathly pale. Soon there was nothing more to be seen of the officers and the prisoner but the gleam of their bayonets among the trees bordering the defile.

P. S.—It will be well, my friend, for thee to destroy my letters of these last few months. In case I should ever return to cultivated society, they would make me quite impossible. This partisanship for work and poor people! This encomium of religious faith! This giving human beings the preference over the military! It is incredible how quickly one becomes a peasant!

Thirty-eighth Sunday.

In Adamshaus everything goes on as if it had never been otherwise. And how different it was a few weeks ago! Even then our burdens seemed heavy enough, yet in comparison with to-day it was a genuine paradise. The grain stood in luxuriant abundance in the fields; Barbel was tending her garden; the unsuspecting housefather was working in the meadow; Valentin was hoping for a leave to come home, and Rocherl was still busy about the place. To-day our Adam and the grain lie buried deep in the earth; Barbel is ill in her room; Valentin is in prison, and Rocherl has disappeared.

And what if other days should come with which this present time seemed a paradise! I wonder what else the cruel God may have stored away in

His arsenal! Sometimes one feels like dashing the whole concern at His feet with the words: "Fool other people with Thy beautiful world!" The housemother often grumbles at this God, then she kneels down humbly and prays: "Thy will be done!"

Rocherl is nowhere to be found. Since the day of the funeral when he was asked to carry the little casket, he has not been seen in Almgai. He took nothing with him excepting the clothes he wore and the old gun. Once he was seen up on the Alm, and later in a charcoal-burner's cave far back in the valley. The hunter, Konrad, is searching for him, they say. Quite naturally, if Rocherl took a gun with him! But Rocherl had been heard to say that he knew of other game which did not concern the hunter. One hardly knows what to make of this passionate lad. Konrad thinks that we should not let him get out of our sight.

"Do you mean something special by that, hunter?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders. Not let him get out of our sight! The young man has taken that matter most decidedly into his own hands.

Wouldst thou believe it, philosopher, that in Almgai grain has again been planted? It seems that they can sow in the autumn also, and that this crop is called the winter wheat. It will be green before the snow comes, then during the long frosty season it apparently dies, but when the snow melts, it sprouts anew, fresh and vigorous, and ripens at

about the same time as that planted in the spring, while it bears still better grain. "If a man crosses a grain field in the autumn, the farmer follows him with a piece of bread; if he crosses it in the spring the farmer follows him with a stick." This proverb indicates the nature of the growth. In the autumn the roots grow downwards into the earth, in the spring the seed-buds grow skywards.

I admire one thing about these people and it is that they do not lose their confidence, and, in spite of storms and bad harvests, they sow once more. It may all be a failure as before,—that which they are sacrificing in time, labour and seed,—still they do it and the reward finally comes, recompensing everything. For the blessing of the earth is greater than the curse of the heavens.

As for ourselves, there is nothing further for us to do at present. The housemother and I work in the potato field from morning till evening. We are quite alone at this task and we hope to have finished harvesting the crop before the first snow comes. Digging potatoes is one of the few things which I have learned without much difficulty. Or is it because there is no time left to learn? The small number of potatoes which in the beginning I hacked with a hoe hurt me as much as if they had been my own toes. In the evening we load the bags on wheelbarrows, and together push them up to the farmyard. I often long to talk of all that which has happened to us, but my housemother gives me no opportunity. She speaks of the potatoes, of

the autumn clover, and of the moles—but seldom of the sorrow that is weighing so heavily upon us all. Rocherl's behaviour seems to pain her more than anything else, and once in the midst of our digging, she exclaimed: "He deserves to be thrashed with the handle of the hoe! So idiotic! So abominable of him to run away! Such a sorrow as we have and to run away!"

"I will hunt for him again next Sunday," I said.

To this she replied: "Yes, strangers have to help us out! Why should our own children bring so much misery upon us? All of them! They are all alike! 'T is a pity that Franzel is not also grown. I am curious to know what he will be up to!" And she burst into a shrill laugh. Yes, friend Alfred, it is very cheerful with us now! And the teacher keeps away, also.

But it cannot go on in this way. I am racking my brains to think what we shall do next. Necessity teaches pious people to pray; it teaches me to make plans. A few days ago I wrote to a lawyer of my acquaintance, informing him of my wager and asking what I should do to make the matter secure. My sublime and poetic feelings have been thoroughly subdued during these hard experiences, but I will not give up my money. I have too good a use for it. One cannot do everything with money, it is true, especially if one has n't any. But if one has it and knows how to use it, then it works like magic. And the right kind of a tyrant must be placed over Adamshaus. The couple must marry;

Rocherl must return home; Franzel take to the plough, and the soldier boy we must get released. Money will do all this, and why should I not have my generous vices as well as other people? If Baron Wieselwang spends twenty thousand *Kronen* yearly for hunting sports, why then should not Trautendorffer, whose forefathers were probably highway robbers at the time of the Hohenstauffen, also invest something for his own pleasure? It would really give me great satisfaction to set this Adamshaus family on their feet again. I will re-establish one of the old peasant farms just when it is becoming the fashion to disestablish them. If it be foolish, then I do not see why I should not use my money foolishly if I choose. I once knew a fine gentleman who spent half a million on women and sport, to the ruin of his family. My vices are not so costly as that. And, of course, not so generous, either.

Well, for the present, I must bravely help with the labour of my hands. Yesterday my day's work was not a bad one. It was not potatoes, but something better. I will tell thee about it. A stranger came to the house—half peasant, half gentleman, and half something else. A repulsive figure, with a hump on his back, crooked legs, and a bald head. Otherwise, agreeable enough. He had an officious, round, well-shaved face, and he expressed great sympathy for the evil fortune which had befallen our family. He, too, had had a very poor year. The peasant, however, had his land left where some-

thing might grow again. But the bad weather which had destroyed the harvests had also destroyed everything he possessed. And for that reason the Christian spirit of Mistress Adam would surely inspire her to return, at least, a part of the money he had paid down for the grain. It was not necessary to pay it at once; he would wait out of brotherly love; yes, he—being a man who would not desert his neighbour—was even ready to do something else. Was Mistress Adam perhaps in need of cash at present? It would not be strange, after such a misfortune. Two hundred, three hundred *Gulden?* She only need name the sum. And she might have it without interest. He would not hurry her about repaying it; that was not his way—to derive profit from the misfortunes of others. If in five years it was not convenient for her to return the money, he would willingly take security for it; perhaps the little piece of wood-land below by the meadow as far as the cliff—and he would merely ask for her signature —just for form's sake. And the money paid down for the grain, he would not mention again. *In Gottesnamen!*

I could hardly wait for the scoundrel to finish speaking. Then I came forward: "Worthy sir! The piece of wood-land from the meadow across to the cliff would in five years produce two hundred per cent. on the capital you so generously offer."

"Are you the man of the house?" he asked, suavely.

"No, only the farmhand!" I answered, and seizing him by the arm, I led him out through the doorway, far across the field down to the board fence, over which I flung him. After this piece of work I enjoyed my evening, and had a good appetite for my supper. And I think I deserved it.

Now to another idyl. A few days ago a woodcutter from the valley came rushing into our house and demanded brandy. The housemother recognised the man as Toifel, a half-witted, notoriously violent man, and she answered quite kindly: "There is water in the spring, or thou mayest have a bowl of milk. No other drink can be had here."

"I must have brandy!" he snarled, cowering in the corner and snorting like a wild boar. We could not understand what it meant, yet we none of us inquired what ailed him. His eyes glared like daggers, with which he seemed to long to tear us in pieces. Soon after, a labourer from Gleimer's arrived, asking if we had heard the news. Old Michelmensch had been stabbed!

"The pair?" we asked.

"No, Michelin is still alive. Michel lies in the mortuary."

"Thou liest!" screamed Toifel from his corner. "I stabbed him, but not hard enough to kill him!"

"He lies in the mortuary," repeated the man from Gleimer's.

Whereupon Toifel began to roar like a bull. Then, kneeling down before me, he said: "I beg of thee, Adam, if thou wilt not give me brandy,

then bind me and deliver me up to justice. *Jesses! Jesses!* Now, I have killed old Michel!"

"But why? Why? Man, why didst thou kill him?"

That he could not tell. He was passing by Hüttbauer's house, his axe swung over his shoulder. The old pauper was standing in his way in the middle of the road. "Get out of the way, Michel!" he cried. The old man did not stir, but answered defiantly: "Get out of the way, thyself!" Whereupon Toifel asked once more: "Thou wilt not?" To which Michel replied: "No." "Very good, then I will clear the road myself!" And springing upon the pauper, he struck him a blow with the axe. "Oh!" laughed Michel, "Thou wouldst tickle me a little?" then, suddenly collapsing, he fell over dead. The man from Gleimer's corroborated this story.

That same night we took the monster down to Kailing to deliver him up. As we were passing the mortuary in Hoisendorf, where a light was burning in the window, Gleimer's man asked Toifel: "Wouldst thou not like to look in and see what Michel is doing?" Toifel hurried on. Only once by the high bridge he stopped, sighed deeply, and said: "The gentlemen outside there will make me a lot of trouble! Just drop me down into the water!"

On the way home we stopped at the mortuary and looked at the dead man. His wife, now indeed grown to be an aged woman, was busy washing the

congealed blood from his breast with a bit of cloth. She was as calm as if she were washing an article of clothing for Sunday. The gaping wound was on the left side, showing that the blow had been aimed at the heart.

"Clumsy, clumsy child!" said the old woman to herself; "it is fortunate, though, that nothing worse than this has happened to thee!"

"What does she mean?" I asked Gleimer's man. Then he told me how the old woman had lost a son years ago, and how she had always been under the illusion that he was still alive, and would return some day. And when she saw Toifel coming out of the woods, she had mistaken him for her son running up to embrace his father. So the poor old thing has become insane. And yet she remains cheerful.

Canst thou understand such things, philosopher? I cannot. It must be that this incident has occurred to show us mournful Adamshaus people a contrasting picture. A still greater misfortune—and yet cheerful, withal! I cannot tell thee how worried I am about Rocherl!

Thirty-ninth Sunday.

The days pass in their dull routine. This week the tailor, Setznagel, has been working here in the house. Yet there is hardly anyone for whom to work. Franzel is still at home and he is to have a new winter suit. The family wanted to sell the homespun loden-cloth and buy cotton stuff in its

place, because the latter is cheaper and would be better adapted for town wear, in case he should go away to study. But my advice was: "Homespun jackets for a peasant lad!"

"Thou art probably right, Hansel," answered the housemother, as she unwound thread for the tailor, "I never can decide things; do as thou thinkest best!"

Do as thou thinkest best! Am I, then, really given the place of honour and made manager of affairs at Adamshaus? And if so, dare I take the responsibility of persuading our little Franz to remain in his miserable mountain home, when a better fortune might be awaiting him in other parts of the wide world? O friend, my confidence in this honourable peasant class is beginning to fall like a barometer in a storm.

When the tailor commenced taking his measurements, he stopped in front of me and asked the housemother: "Is the farmhand to have a suit also?"

"Certainly," she replied, "he is to have an outfit for an entire year; from the brown or the grey loden-cloth, as he will."

"Mother," I interrupted, "I do not need any clothes yet, and I can easily get through the year with what I have."

"He refuses to take the clothes and I have no money for him," she said bitterly.

Then I approached her, so near that her whirling reel fanned my face: "I have already said several

times that thou didst owe me nothing, and thou must long since have realised that God did not cut me out for a farmhand. The block of wood was not hard enough for that. Nor am I an enchanted prince. I came into the mountains for health's sake alone. Yes, yes, mother, just for my health! Because manual labour and the sweating are so good for one. Up here among you all I have quite recovered, and after this to receive pay! If I am of any use I will gladly stay a while longer. Later, in the winter, perhaps, when everything is going on better here, I may set forth on my wanderings once more."

"So!" she cried, stopping the reel. "Very good, then! If the farmhand goes too, we might as well hang the cattle up by their tails and let ourselves be buried alive. Anyhow, things cannot be much worse than they are now!"

"Are there other clothes to be made or not?" interrupted the tailor, with his sharp, high voice. He stood before us domineeringly, his measuring-tape in his hand, ready to measure my legs, my waist, and my back. Here among peasants a tailor will stand no nonsense; no, indeed! Rather is he an object to be feared and dreaded. He rules the house, demands his special food, and requires his bed to be made in a particular manner. If the room is one degree too cold—it is never too warm—then he begins angrily to pull the thread and to blame the mistress of the house if it breaks; he tosses the pieces of cloth about and makes things generally

uncomfortable for her. And when he goes to the next house he will sing her praises in a most doubtful manner.

Since no one else was to have a suit, our little tailor began to glare about him with terrible eyes, until, pointing at the garments cut out for Franzel, he broke out with: "So it 's for that trifle we 've been dragged up this mountain!"

"*Mein Gott*," laughed the housemother bitterly, "how can I help it if the people die, are led off by police officers, or run away of their own accord?"

"Can I help it?" demanded the tailor.

Then I grew angry. Bringing my fist down hard on the table, I cried: "What are you grumbling about? Tailor, you are to do what is to be done, and if it does not suit you, it is easier to go down the mountain than it was to come up. Do you understand me now?"

This brought matters to a nice pass. The tailor understood only too well, but he was not in the least disconcerted by my words. He walked calmly over to the bench where the housemother was sitting and demanded his money. It seems that they have been owing him for a long time. Now it devolved upon me to open my purse and hand over the remainder of my savings. It was exactly enough to appease the insulted man. He then gathered up his utensils and his apprentice and was gone. The trousers cut out for Franzel still lay on the table. If they could have been hammered together with iron nails, perhaps the former blacksmith might

have known what to do, but the needle is not one of his accomplishments. So now I am beginning to make mischief in this house. But who would have thought that this little tailor could in any way have brought trouble upon us?

It was quite in accord with the rest when a letter, which was worse than none at all, arrived to-day from my lawyer. My affair with Herr Stein von Stein—he writes—is in a somewhat precarious condition. It would be well for me to secure at once reliable witnesses, for my opponent in the wager seemed to be a shrewd man and disinclined to make allowances for a "hare-brained hobby." I must not think—advised my lawyer—of taking to my heels and going to the city to look after my affair. To leave the farm would be to forfeit all rights to the wager. Not one hour of the year should be lacking.

Now we know. This may develop into a pretty story. In my enthusiasm of the summer I became somewhat indifferent to the whole matter; but now, as the days and the year grow shorter, my eagerness for my money and my rights returns. I will not give up my wager! I wrote back to my lawyer friend at once to do everything in his power to bring the witnesses to terms, and to keep them to their promise, and that, if necessary, my opponent should be threatened with the law. But nothing can be done until the expiration of the given term. We have still three months.

So the devil is gradually drawing his net about thy farmhand, whom thou, Alfred, hast bravely en-

couraged. Thy philosophical consolations have always done good service, but from now on, I frankly admit, I should prefer cash!

Fortieth Sunday.

So my Sunday letters are beginning to make thee sad! Well, I am glad of it. I wish thee no greater sadness than that caused by pity, but if thou hast pity for us, I am comforted.

The communications I have to make to-day can hardly be called good news, although the autumn sky is clear and bright above us and the fields are covered with a fresh spring-like green. This stupid Rocherl! He is still missing. We thought perhaps he had gone to Laibach to beg for his brother's release from prison. If that had been the case, he would have been obliged to take Valentin's place. There is a consuming passion in Rocherl's love as well as in his hate. But the soldier-son has sent us a letter which has caused his mother to clap her hands for joy. In consideration of the peculiar circumstances that we had set forth in our petition to his superior officer, Valentin has been released after forty-eight hours in confinement. This officer—and were his moustache ever so bristly—I should like to kiss as I would a dancing girl at a fair!

Speaking of girls, my girl! That is, ours! I should say, the teacher's girl! She is out of bed, out of her room. She is already pulling turnips, and once she even laughed! It occurred last Wednesday. As we were sitting around the fireplace cutting

away the leaves from the turnips, Barbel lighted the taper. In doing this a tiny spark fell upon her hand. "Oh!" she cried, then burst into a clear, ringing laugh. It happened at twenty minutes before six. This laugh resounded like Easter bells over the entire house. I should not have been greatly surprised had it wakened Adam in his grave. Could he have heard this laugh during those hard days he would still be alive. And I even wished that the stupid Rocherl could have heard it also. This song, so like that of the lark, would perhaps be able to lure him back to his home fireside. Why need he be roaming about in the forest with his gun, when Barbel is laughing at home? And why did she laugh? Because the burning spark fell upon her tender flesh. She must have passed through a strange kind of fire if a spark causes nothing more than laughter!

That same night I went down to the schoolhouse and rapped on the window.

"What 's the matter?" cried Guido, heavy with sleep.

"Barbel has laughed!"

Then he rose, let me in, and by the light of a candle we sat down at the table, and I said: "If a man will not marry a woman when she weeps, he surely ought to marry her when she laughs."

"Very well," he answered, "we will set the day at once. Everything else is in order. Thou knowest how matters stand."

"And thou shouldst also know how they stand

with me," I replied. "I trust thou wilt not change thy plans in any respect when I tell thee that I shall be obliged to have a lawsuit to obtain my wager."

"Thy wager with Stein von Stein? Hans, thou wilt lose it!"

"Then, Winter, thou, too, must be prepared for thy hail-storm this year."

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, "a schoolmaster is heavily insured against hail-storms."

"The trouble," I said, "will be with the outfit——"

"Thou canst lend me nothing?" he interrupted. "That will be hard, the devil take it all!"

"It is quite time that thou shouldst begin to plan for thyself."

He walked up and down the room in his night-clothes, repeating: "That will be hard!"

"I could not endure it, shouldst thou be the cause of stopping her laughter now!"

The candle had burned low. He did not light another, for there were no more in the house. While the wick still glimmered in the candlestick, he paced the floor, grumbling because he must be so severely punished for that one little sin.

"The rope always cuts deepest into the flesh the more one resists it," I said. "Why, then, art thou so afraid of working in the sweat of thy brow, as a sinner deserves to do? Take a piece of the Adamshaus farm, and cultivate potatoes."

Stopping in his walk, he said: "Thou art right. If I cannot advance in my present profession, then

I will cultivate potatoes and cabbages. We should not starve — she knows how already, and I can learn."

"That 's more like it, Guido, that 's more like it! I should have strangled thee, hadst thou deserted her."

Then he grew thoughtful again, saying that he was in a very peculiar position. "If I do not do it, thou wilt strangle me, and if I do, some one else will strangle me."

"Some one else? What dost thou mean by that?"

"I really think I must light up again, for it is uncanny talking about such things in the dark. I intended to keep it to myself, but since we are on the subject, I will tell thee. Do not let it get any farther, for I may have been deceived. It may have been some one else. Thou thinkest that he has gone after his brother?"

"Art thou speaking of Rocherl?"

"Last evening, as I was walking through the Edelbrand, I noticed something moving behind a rock which stands under the red pine-tree, and I saw that it was a man hiding. As I started to go up and see who was there, he sprang out and away into the thicket. He had a gun with him and it was Adam's Rocherl."

"Didst thou recognise him surely?"

"I do not think that I was mistaken. One hand was bandaged. With the other he was going to shoot at me, I am convinced of it."

"Schoolmaster," I said, "one does not say such

things as lightly as that! Shoot thee! What a way to talk! In the first place, it probably was not he at all; other people might wear their hands in bandages. It was doubtless some stupid poacher whom thou hast disturbed at his shooting."

"Good," replied Winter, "I will acknowledge that I may have been mistaken, I will acknowledge it. But I, myself, am convinced that it was Rocherl and that he meant to shoot me."

"Tell me, then, what grounds thou hast for such a fearful suspicion. It must be thine evil conscience on account of thy continued delay with Barbel. It really begins to look as if thou didst intend to sneak out of it, and in that case a Valentin from Faust would be most appropriate. Have the wedding, Guido, and everything will be different,—if only for the sake of this crazy boy."

Then he talked a while at random, one moment saying that all was arranged, the next, that it was a question of when and how, and that one should never be too hasty in such important matters. Besides, if he married at once, it would look precisely as if he had been frightened and forced into it by the threatened shooting. No, Guido Winter was not to be persuaded by such means; and, after all, he knew best himself when and whom he would marry.

"Now," I said, "that sounds more decided; that is no longer sneaking out of it; it is a frank refusal."

"How absurdly thou dost interpret what I say!" he cried, laughing. "Well, that thou mayest sleep

in peace—wouldst thou have it in All Souls week? Supposing we say immediately after."

Twelve days after All Souls—that will be a Sunday. Then he will marry her. I am really glad to know that a day is fixed upon, for now the anxious hearts in Adamshaus may be at rest. Since Winter apparently intends to do right by the girl, I will give thee one or two more of his interesting characteristics. For example:

A few days ago, during school hours, a tramp crept into his room and stole a pair of shoes. The miscreant was caught below by the bridge in the act of putting them on. Making a bold face of it, he said:

"What would you have, then? Perhaps you think we like to walk barefoot in the frost and snow when winter comes, while all the time the gentleman has an extra pair of shoes under his bed! He can lock his door if he does n't want his things stolen! That 's a bungling way to manage! But I took nothing else. Another man would have taken the rain-coat also, and I could have made use of it myself. But, I thought, no, I won't steal. I 'll only take the pair of shoes with me. There is nothing wrong about that, so long as the gentleman is n't using them. Besides, one is already breaking at the toe!"

"Do you know what I will do?" asked the teacher. "You may have the shoes, but you must first split a load of kindling-wood for me."

"*Potztausend!*" snarled the tramp, throwing the

shoes at the teacher's feet: "Here, take your old things! They are full of holes."

One who wished to call the police in the mountains would be jeered at by echoes. So the teacher took the old tramp by his ears and shook him so hard that the clattering of his teeth could be heard as far up as the inn. Yet even this failed to subdue the man's sense of humour. Before he departed he held both his hands over his ears, crying: "My hearing apparatus is now hot, but my toes are freezing."

And then the teacher threw the shoes after the poor, shivering devil. I hope he will not repent of it when he has to black his only remaining pair on his feet.

The teacher is quite sure of himself in the school, and he torments neither himself nor the children with the tasks. The little ones he has repeat A. B. C., read words, and recite verses which they have learned by heart. Not much attention is paid to the meaning, that takes too long. Nor do the parents ask about it; they are content if the pupils can read fluently. It is a very good thing to read correctly, but in their opinion it is still better to read rapidly, because it saves time. Each scholar has an answer ready for every question. "How much is twice seven?" asks the teacher. "Twice seven is—is—is—" stammers the pupil. The teacher comes to his aid! "Is four . . ." "Is fourteen!" "Good, Michel, that is going very well." And so they slide smoothly over their difficulties. It is

learned quite well enough to forget again, Herr Winter thinks, and next year things will get on faster. After school, out on the meadow by the edge of the woods, when he is examining a bumblebee's nest, or taking a wriggling frog into his hand, they all stand around in a small circle, watching him and listening to him. But it is a question, whether at the examination, the school inspector will ask how wide the yellow speckled salamander opens its mouth, or how the squirrels build their nests. The teacher sometimes has the more advanced pupils take his place at the desk while he mends his shoes or sews a button on his coat, and if they do their examples well, after school they are allowed to go hunting beetles with him. Of course they do their examples well, for one copies from another. Why should each child trouble to discover powder for himself when one has already discovered it? The teacher never looks over the examples, for pedantry is not one of his failings, and he is the happiest of all when the school hours are over. The best thing about it is that the children are devoted to him, and he has some influence over their behaviour. The question of morals has not yet been discussed, and all the rest will come of itself. A man will learn to reckon when he no longer has to do with ciphering and examples, but when he has corn and wood to measure and *Gulden* and *Kreuzer* to count. Besides, Herr Winter probably believes that even the best mathematicians may sometimes make a mistake in life.

On the whole, I must acknowledge that I cannot fully understand him. At times it seems as if the fellow had two sides, like pedler's loden-cloth. On the one side, he is the stern moralist; on the other, Jack Rake.

And now I wonder what he will make of Barbel! Or she of him! About the latter I am not anxious.

Forty-first Sunday.

The enclosure in thy letter of the 2nd inst. surprised me not a little. No, I did not mean that. I am not sure but I need thy friendly encouragement just now even more than money, although this material aspect of thy philosophy is not unwelcome. But I cannot repay the sum until there is a change in my fortunes. Thou must expect nothing from a farmhand. These fellows never pay. And what if the credit of the author and journalist should prove to be no better! I will come down to you all from the mountain of Adamshaus with my basket full of intellectual fertiliser, and I will open a literary workshop. I will bring with me a fresh, powerfully fragrant naturalism. That is, the ideals in my novels shall be true to nature. Then every literary tendency will be satisfied,—and I hope the creditors as well.

But let me tell thee, good friend, that I was greatly embarrassed by thy hundred-*Gulden* note. In this neighbourhood no one could change it, not even the innkeeper at Hoisendorf, in spite of his drawer full of coins. I was obliged to go to Kailing

to get it changed. Then I remembered the gold nuggets buried in these ruined fields, and that an ear of wheat is worth more than the most beautiful brand-new thousand-*Gulden* note. Money is worthless until blessed by the soil. Is it not so?

Thine offer to look into the present circumstances of *The Continental Post*, and especially to find out about the witness, Lobensteiner, I accept gratefully. Ask how the reporter is getting on in the nerve hospital. If he can still recall the case, then I should consider my affair as good as won. Besides, it is unthinkable to me that Dr. Stein could decamp. A betting debt is a gambling debt, and a gambling debt is an affair of honour, which even a knave considers binding.

And now back to my report. That miserable Rocherl is still missing. The housemother almost decided to have the fact announced in church, but she did not wish to make public the shame of a runaway child. We nearly caught him once. Last Wednesday the hunter, Konrad, sent us word that Rocherl was in the Legwindhütte. This was no very gratifying news, glad as we were to find some trace of him. The Legwindhütte in Fuchsgraben is a low tavern, where all kinds of rabble assemble: tramps, poachers, and of late the parish council have even found disreputable women there. From time to time the police clear out this den; but it gradually refills with doubtful characters, who seek refuge with the old woman who keeps the place. Here they roast their potatoes, and give her many a bite

for the use of her house. What can the lad be after to hide in such a hole as this?

Well, last Thursday we started out on our search, the housemother, Barbel, and I. At first Barbel did not wish to go. She seems to suspect that Rocherl is now hunting down a human life. She speaks of him as if he were ill. And once she made this remark: "*Mein Gott*, one does not always realise what a blessing it is when our dear ones die. If the hunter had shot a little differently at that time, then I should have a brother in heaven now." They were the bitterest words I ever heard her utter.

Her mother answered in a voice of sharp reproval: "Thou hadst better not talk! I, too, would rather have my daughter a virgin in heaven——"

Here I felt it my duty to interfere. As the peace-making Adam is no longer with us, some one must take his place.

"That would be a thousand pities," I said, "for then all the angels would be in heaven, leaving only the human beings on earth."

How thankfully the girl looked at me for speaking thus! *Gott*, but she has a wonderful light in her eyes! Then, boldly interpreting the Gospels, I said that the Lord would have greater joy over one sheep brought back into the fold than over the ninety and nine that were lost. So we would courageously start forth to find the one. No matter if my Bible verse was misquoted, they were all grateful to me for it.

Then we proceeded on our way across the Alm,

and down into the Fuchsgraben. The housemother was in a war-like mood; she plunged her stick energetically into the ground with every step. But Barbel was of the opinion that a stick would be of little use in recovering lost sheep. As we approached the Legwindhütte, she said: "We will be very gentle with him, shall we not, mother, when we find him?"

"I will break my stick across somebody's back to-day!" cried the housemother, swinging her hazel-nut staff in the air. "Who it will be remains to be seen. Rocherl has been led astray."

We descended into the gorge. The bushes are already turning yellow but the leaves are still hanging on the branches. The Fuchsgraben had escaped the hail-storm. It would have hardly paid heaven to hurl down its icy wrath upon the hazel-bushes and wild berries. The hillsides are covered with a tangle of blackberry-vines, through which, now and then, a figure may be seen crawling, making a mid-day repast from the withered berries. The Legwindhütte leans against the cliff, and is roughly built of brown stone, the mortar being already loosened in the cracks. On the door- and window-frames the rain has washed bare the slate-coloured fibre; the window-panes consist partly of dingy glass, partly of paper, partly of rags. The roof is weighted with stones. Close by stands a kind of goat- and pig-stall, pieced together out of rough trusses of straw. The whole place is buried in a rank growth of sorrel, nettles and unsightly weeds.

Behold this glorious picture! It might hang in any drawing-room—on canvas!

By the brook, gurgling down through the stony gorge, knelt the old witch, washing a pair of trousers. Approaching her, I shook her by her bony shoulder and shouted my question in her ear, trying to make my voice heard above the sound of the water: "Where is Adamshäuser's Rocherl?" She glared at me stupidly, saying that she was indeed the owner of the Legwindhütte, but she knew nothing about an Adamshäuser's son.

"She is washing his fustian trousers now!" exclaimed Barbel.

Then he must be in the nest, we thought, so we forced our way into the hut. By the sharp squeak of the rusty door-hinges I recognised the clever watchfulness of the hostess. My first experience was to knock my head against the beam. My legs became entangled in the straw scattered about on the floor, where here and there lay parts of old clothing. A worn pack of cards was lying on the worm-eaten table, and empty schnapps-glasses were standing beside them, flies sticking to their edges. By the brown tile-stove were hanging remnants of shirts. No one was in sight. We entered the kitchen, and Barbel seized my arm in fright, for it was dark and the decaying boards in the floor swayed under our feet. There was an odour of rotten turnips, and in the glimmering coals of the fire were half-burned potatoes. We found no one here. Then I climbed the ladder to the loft above,

where, buried in the hay, a man was lying, but I could see only his black, disordered hair. Soon he raised himself and growled: "Who is there?"

"That is my question also," I replied.

Rising to a sitting posture, he said: "Thou askest that? Good, my fine gentleman, thou shalt hear. But do not come near me. It is unhealthy up here. I am double, if thou wishest to know. I am the Bavarian, Hiesel, and Schinderhans."

"Ah, good morning, gentlemen!" I laughed. "Will one of you be so good as to tell me whether there is a third one with you, Rochus Weiler, by name?"

"Don't know," answered the voice.

"Then perhaps the other one knows."

"I don't know either," said the same voice.

"He carries his arm in a sling," I explained.

"Oh, the gentleman means the one-handed man? He cannot be very far away, for his whistle stands over there."

His whistle proved to be our old gun, which was in reality standing in the corner. As we found Rocherl neither in the house nor outside, I took the gun apart and carried it away with me.

Above the hut we sat down on the moss, and waited until late in the evening. Several poor vagabonds slunk by us through the underbrush on their way to the hut, where they passed in and out or crept lazily around it. But Rocherl was not among them. With our errand unaccomplished we returned home at midnight.

"We have only this," said Barbel, as I hung the old gun on the nail. In the shed it was quite dark. When we said good-night on separating she reached out after my hand and murmured: "I thank thee, Hansel, for going with us." And her soft, warm fingers rested for one instant on my wrist.

Philosopher, philosopher! The girl is coming to life!

Forty-second Sunday.

Now it is glorious again on the mountains! How incomparably more beautiful is the still, clear, constant autumn than the moody, fickle, stormy, ardent May—the youth of the year! I wish I might show thee the beech- and cherry-trees in their mantles of red and purple, and the maples and larches gleaming gold against the dark background of the wide pine forest. The silvery hoar-frost glistens in the valleys, and on the heights, sunshine, sunshine everywhere! The entire Almgai is one brilliant bouquet beneath the crystalline sky. Man, my fears that I might become poetic before this year ended, were not without foundation. Or, has my sense of vision merely become sharpened, so that the herdsmen's huts on the Alm gleam like tiny white dots in the landscape, while on the distant mountains each crevice, each crack, each sand hill and each snow-flake stands out clear and distinct, as if the vast sea of atmosphere did not lie between me and them? A cool mountain breeze wafts the fragrance of the cyclamen and the gentian and the breath of damp earth into my face.

In the midst of this new beauty the misery is all the greater by contrast. What must the activity of the autumn be like here in other years? The fields and gardens filled with happy people, whose voices, exuberant with the joys of harvest, resound from mountain to mountain, fully compensating for the absence of the bird songs. But this year everything dead, silence everywhere! Only here and there a herdsman snapping his whip, not for joy, rather in impatience, because his herds are restlessly wandering about, seeking grass on the frost-bitten pastures and constantly trying to escape beyond the borders of their fields. In former years the young men of the neighbourhood gathered on the open meadows to sing, wrestle, and while away their time. This year they wander singly and gloomily, thinking and wondering what they shall do with their active, craving natures, if life in their native mountains is to become impossible. In the gorges the water continuously murmurs as if in a dream: "I am the eternal lord of the mountains. I chisel the rock and break it in pieces. I build the Alps and tear them down and carry them away. Thy fields and thy houses, O mankind, I destroy by flood, and also thy graves!"

Just here, my friend, the thought comes to me whether after all those people may not be right who would remove man from the mountain districts that he may seek and found a more habitable home in the wide world. No, no, the primitive nature of man resists the idea, for to nothing does it cling so

tenaciously as to home. And the mountain races are also the most enduring. Mankind is nowhere so firmly rooted as among the peasants, and this is especially true in the mountain region. If this land fails them, what is there that will stand? Could the seed of the Adamshäuser race have developed so richly and so nobly in a nomadic life? Only unhappy people wander; Cain was the first nomad. Whence comes our civilisation? Where is it more at home, in old well-known places or on the street? Industry and trade build in a night cities which also disappear in a night. They build only tents. The peasantry, this rock of the human race, builds houses, and from out these houses come forth those who, rich in surplus force, have founded fortresses, castles, and churches, and those cities which grow for centuries and for centuries endure as the flower of mankind, until at last they decay and fall in ruins. The patrician class, from which good breeding, obedience, dignity, strength, loyalty, patriotism, and social laws have developed, from what source shall these be recruited? They will disappear if the soil ceases to produce her sturdy sons, if the peasant—whether by storms or floods, or by the force of arms—is removed from his clod of earth.

Thou knowest, my friend, that a year ago I said much about the peasantry, but I was as one colour-blind. I loved it as one loves the idylls of Saloman Gessner. To-day I love it as I do the Odyssey! In this class, my Alfred, exist, side by side with tremendous strength, a spirit of sacrifice and a quiet

enduring love bordering on the heroic. It possesses a power and an intellectual activity, of which the arrogant fools in frock-coats have no conception. And if I could ever believe in happiness in this world, I would seek it far from the noisy cities in the peace of a country home, surrounded by the eternal forces of nature, that vivify me, occupy me, and nourish me, that one must worship and love even in their wrath. And with this knowledge, I have made up my mind to stand by my poor Adam's family, that they may hold fast to their homestead as long as possible. However terrible the misery may have been, especially in these last days, yet it is better than being tossed about in strange lands, defenceless to resist the wild spirit of the age.

Herrgott! When I picture my old housemother outside in the uncertain world! Or my true-hearted girl! It makes me tremble to think of her as a schoolmaster's wife, wandering with bag and baggage from one schoolhouse to another. Is it then so wonderfully wise and good for these two people to be united for all their lives, just because they once cared for one another a little?

Last Sunday as we were kneeling together on the bench before the table performing our usual Sunday devotions, I had a vision. A hand seemed suddenly to be hovering over our heads, but as I looked up there was nothing to be seen. It was a flat, broad peasant hand, like that of my lost Adam. I stopped short in the prayer and Barbel glanced at

me with a startled expression. Ah, what a different being one becomes in this earth kingdom!

It is well, however, that other incidents have occurred to sober me completely. My pride has had a fall and a fir-tree was the cause. Now, listen to my tale.

The season for making litter has arrived; this means preparing a green carpet for the cattle in the stall, to be renewed once every week. Straw is not used for litter here, even when they have it, for it is mixed with the hay and given as fodder. Nor do they like to rob the roots of the trees of their moss and heather. The trees would rather sacrifice their green branches than the moist protecting covering of their roots. So the peasant comes, selects the tree—which, however, is only subjected to this treatment once in eight years—scales the trunk, and with his axe chops off the longest and thickest boughs as winter litter for the stable. The tenderest twigs and sprouts are left and with these the severely wounded tree must recover itself for the next time. It is an abominable arrangement, but the peasant in Almgai insists that he knows of nothing else to use for litter, or which would produce the proper compost. I endeavoured to make theoretical proposals, but the housemother relied on experience and sent me out into the forest. First I was obliged to bind a pair of climbing-irons to my feet, then, after sticking the axe into my belt behind, to climb the tree like a squirrel to the very top.

Last year there were three of them to trim the boughs from the trees, Adam, Valentin, and Rocherl. Barbel gaily gathered up the fallen branches, the housemother came with a cart and a pair of oxen to take them back to the farmyard, where they were cut into small pieces and piled up in the loft for winter use. The two lads sang and shouted up in the tree tops, and rocked to and fro, sometimes springing from one branch to another in their exuberance. But to-day? To-day there is only one man here—and he can neither shout for joy nor trim the trees. The trimming in itself would be simple enough, but, oh, the scaling the trunk! The housemother herself bound the climbing-irons to my feet and Barbel gave me instructions in climbing, telling me that one stood much more securely on the trunk with the sharp spikes than on the ground in ordinary shoes. She then explained how one must embrace the tree with one arm, as if one loved it, and with the other chop off the branches, until the ground was covered.

I have fought duels, and in the army I was not drilled in cowardice; so up I went! But, I thought to myself, how high must I climb? When I reached a spot where the tree began to rock me gently, the trunk quivering with every stroke of my axe, as if trying to shake me off, and when it bent under me like a snake and almost snapped, then I was completely overcome. My limbs trembled, the forest whirled before my eyes—and I was obliged to descend as rapidly as possible.

"*Mein Gott!*" said the housemother, "if we women folks did not have to wear these stupid skirts, which catch on everything, I believe I would climb the tree myself!"

Thou canst imagine how comfortable it was for me to stand there! "It is nothing but an attack of vertigo," I said, for the sake of saying something.

"The next time it will go all right," the housemother assured me. "At first, of course, it might make one a bit dizzy, if one were not used to it."

"Mother," said the girl, "we will not let Hansel go up again. He does it all too fast; he does not fasten his climbing-irons into the tree, nor does he hold on firmly enough. There is really danger of an accident."

So, on account of my foolhardiness I may not climb the tree again! Ah, well! But what is to be done? Winter is approaching and the branches must be cut. If the old soldier is too foolhardy to climb trees, then he must be exchanged. The housemother dispatched a message to Kulmbock and asked to have a tree-trimmer sent over. Kulmbock was not at home, but his wife replied that she needed all her men, for the mill bridge, which had been torn away by the freshet, must be repaired. And she inquired further if the "gentleman farmhand" could not trim the trees.

Barbel's answer was that their farmhand could indeed trim the trees very well, only it was not safe for him to climb, because he was so hot-blooded, besides being careless about his own safety. But

they would send Hansel to repair the bridge, if Mistress Kulmbock would lend their herdsman to trim the trees. The exchange would be only for a few days, then she might have her man back again.

So for this next week I am to be exchanged as something useless for something useful. The insult would be quite sufficient cause for suicide, if that wonderful girl had not made out my cowardice to be simply an overventuresomeness on my part for which I was not responsible. But what good does that do me, when she does not believe it herself?

Last night I secretly went into the woods and tried it once more. The same foolishness over again. As the tree began to sway, the dizziness overcame me as before, and I was obliged to give it up. I did not go into supper that night, pleading headache as an excuse. And to-morrow morning I am to go to the overbearing Kulmbock's to build a bridge.

One thing more for to-day. In my last letter I gave thee a detailed account of our search for Rocherl and how we discovered his gun and brought it home and hung it up in its old place. It hangs there no longer. One morning we found it gone. He must have come and taken it himself. What an incomprehensible creature he is! Old Marenzel thinks the lead bullet in his hand must have poisoned his blood and his brain. Now the bailiffs are searching for him. We are not safe a single hour from a terrible catastrophe.

Forty-third Sunday.

On Monday I began my bridge building at Ehren-Kulmbock's. I was filled with the greatest desire that somebody—myself excepted—might fall into the water. My shame could only be compensated for by saving life. They commenced to tease me at once by saying that the trees in Adam's woods might indeed be thankful to escape with their branches unharmed, or from being beheaded by Hansel in his courageous fury! For foolhardiness was something these people could not comprehend. Then I saw that it was positively necessary for me quickly to invent some sort of a story.

"Cramps," I said, "those cursed cramps in the legs which I contracted during the long marches in France! It has always been a passion of mine to climb trees, but I am now deprived of the pleasure."

At this they laughed still more, saying that the pine-trees would undoubtedly hang out flags of thanksgiving for reason of my cramps. By Tuesday I no longer needed my newspaper German; my reputation, however, was rising. While the others were awkwardly and clumsily trying to fit the boards into place on the bridge, I, with the remnants of my knowledge of geometry, made a drawing of the bridge on paper, and then very easily figured out the construction, so that we bridged over the deep bed of the brook with comparatively little trouble. This performance placed me in such high repute that the head man called me "Herr Johann" all day. If I had told them that my name was not a

re-hash of Johannes, but was derived from a pagan form of the German "Hansa," the information would have at once thrown into the shade all my technical knowledge of construction.

At the Kulmbock farm—I must confess it—I should not have won my wager of twenty thousand *Kronen*. It is true, there is more to eat, and the food is richer than at Adamshaus, but bits of former meals are adhering to the dishes. The tables and window-panes are so thickly covered with dirt that the autumn flies, with their old weak legs, stick fast in it, as the Hungarian peasants at a village *Kirmess* stick in the mud in the streets. And when it comes to my bed! Friend and philosopher! If in thy wide circle of acquaintances thou shouldst ever hear of anyone afflicted with the burden of idleness, then I beg thee to send him to the Kulmbock farm. Here he will learn industry on his straw bed. My fervent prayer in these nights of agony is: "I will defend myself against my great enemies, if Thou, O Lord, wilt only protect me from the small ones!"

Kulmbock is, of course, not at home. He is constantly going about to reform the world, holding meetings and discussing the "situation." The affairs of his constituency he is taking up with great dignity. And he is quite equal to it. Foremost of all he advocates a proper tax reform. The taxes should not be paid by those who work and produce the commodities, but by those who use them; the importation of grain from Hungary and America must be stopped, that the peasants may obtain

higher prices for their products; the hired labourers must be deprived of their Sunday rest. Kulmbock is not the man to yield. He will look out for that. No one shall get around him and he will put up with no interference. Although he can talk big he can do no harm. In the *Landtag* he will sit behind the pillar and keep very quiet. Since at one and the same sitting he voted both for and against the new railroad tax, and was somewhat unmercifully laughed at for his readiness to agree to everything, he has decided to remain more neutral, to mix himself up with nothing, to allow others to say what they please, while he shows his own cleverness by yielding. It is, he says, very difficult to speak in this motley assembly; one moment this deputy, the next moment that, disapproves of some measure. Then a third man snaps out a bitter remark, and a fourth interrupts with a mean, malicious observation, and a fifth comes down as hard as a flail with a final protest. A man may be quite capable of accomplishing something, but he must possess the cunning of a spider or he will be outwitted by the better educated, or be put to shame by the bragging professional men. "No, indeed!" said Kulmbock, "I won't swallow that! But the time is coming when we shall teach them a thing or two, we peasants! We will back up our speeches with our fists!" And in spite of this, the man has gone away from here where one works with one's hands to a place where one rules by word of mouth. Ah, well! For the sake of such deputies it has been

worth while to bring up the question of parliamentary government and to quarrel at the polls over the right to do as one pleases.

Oh, yes! This "right," which Kulmbock advocated so manfully in the *Landtag*, is now in full force in his own household. Each one does as he will. The men are as lazy and doltish and the maids as blundering as they please. The daughter of the house, Fronel, tried to find out from me something about Rocherl. She had heard that the prayers and fasting at home were too much for him, and that he had joined a robber band. If Rocherl should be the captain of a robber band then she, Fronel, would like to be the captain's wife. And Rocherl was such a handsome fellow, which just suited her. This Fronel has a large mouth and yellow teeth with which she is forever chewing something. At table she always takes the choicest morsels, and if the conversation is beyond her comprehension, she continually asks if it is about something to eat. When she is not hanging around some man, she is sitting in the stuffy back room, ripping and making over her dresses. After she has sewed on a bright ribbon, a bit of embroidery, or some tawdry ornament, she tries it on before the mirror—in this house there is a fine, large one—then rips it all to pieces again to rearrange it in a more becoming way. If her mother calls in to her: "Come, now, thou lazy chit, go and feed the pigs!" she will reply: "Shut up! Thou art none too good to do it thyself!" She would indeed make a nice

wife for Rocherl, she! I would far rather he were with the robber band. As for Mistress Kulmbock, she is even worse than her daughter!

If I, dear philosopher, in the course of this eventful year, should at some time have made the assertion that the cities were teeming with corruption, and that honesty and morality still prevailed among the peasants in the mountains, I will frankly confess my error as far as this household is concerned.

And if by any chance thou shouldst ever have a son, I advise thee to have him learn to trim trees in time. Up among the branches, with the songsters of the woods, one retains faith in the peasants better than down in the dingy hovels.

Forty-fourth Sunday.

One question in thy last letter I must remember to answer. In spite of everything, no, we do not go hungry. One does not know hunger at the breast of Mother Earth. It is only the great cities that are acquainted with it. I do not mean the hunger for oysters and champagne. A well-to-do city man, knowing that close by people are perishing for lack of nourishment, who day and night are shut into their dark nests to keep out the cold, swearing, weeping, and despairing—can yet sit comfortably in the opera and enjoy a brilliant evening. For city people—of course I do not mean thee, my humane Alfred, I mean the majority of the *élite*—for them the hunger and want of the poor are

exactly right as subjects for modern art and as an artistic contrast to their own over-abundance! If they could once feel that it was flesh of their flesh whom gaunt hunger is driving on to frenzy for lack of a bite of bread, they would look at the world with different eyes. Tell those who are studying social questions that they should sometimes study the hunger next door.

Here in the country the poorest go to the poor and are fed. Kulmbock swears horribly about the beggars who come to his gates with their small bags, asking for a bit of grain, or for a tiny pitcher of milk—but he gives it nevertheless. My Adam used to excuse himself when he could only half fill the beggar's bag, saying: "Thou wilt have to be content if it is but a little. We have not any too much ourselves. But God bless it to thee; I give it to thee from my heart."

To return to my story. I have all I can do to manage the housemother. At Adam's death her sorrow was dumb and painful, but now her anxiety has increased to despair.

"If he had only died here at home!" she cried, "that could have been borne! I would bless the Mother of Heaven a thousand times for it."

"He went away of his own accord, so it was not hard for him," I replied.

"And then, Valentin!" she continued. "The one will not come home, the other cannot. Oh, what trouble we have with our children!"

Rocherl has completely disappeared. During the

first days we deceived ourselves, thinking his fury would consume itself, and that when his clothes were worn out and the winter winds were blowing, he would return. Now winter is here, but after searching for him three times in vain, and having lost all traces of him in the Fuchsgraben and elsewhere, we are at a loss what to do. I proposed advertising for him. But the objection to that is the public scandal, which is feared no less in the peasant's home than in the rich man's palace. One day we heard that his hat had been found in Schurwalde. "That means nothing," I said, to comfort the family, "a blockhead can get along without a hat."

"But who will bind his hand for him?" Barbel sometimes asks. That cuts me to the heart more than aught else—not his hand, but her anxiety.

"He will bind it himself," I tell her, "with his left hand and with his teeth. And he has such splendid teeth."

"The hunter has killed him!" moaned the mother.

"Konrad? Who was ready to sacrifice his own hand for Rocherl?"

"I am worried to death!" With this remark she closes every conversation on the subject.

Barbel keeps up much better than her mother. She says little about her brother and she never mentions Guido. Those are still waters! The bridegroom-elect does not over-exert himself with his attentions. I think they hardly see each other

even on Sundays. But now the time will soon be here for the bright side of the picture.

However, the wedding has been postponed once more. This time the tailor, Setznagel, is to blame. He cannot finish the wedding suit until the Feast of St. Leopold. Of course, Guido must have his fine cloth trousers! O Guido, Guido! A lover should be content to marry without the fine clothes! The priest sent word the other day by little Franzel to ask Barbel to return to the choir, as she used to have such a sweet voice for singing. I was pleased with the priest for doing this, and, she, too, seemed very much gratified that the Church had pardoned her for this miserable year. But to sing before the parish, as if in an angel's choir, that she could no longer do.

A short time ago the priest gave the teacher a sharp home thrust. The story in the Gospel of the wedding feast had been read from the pulpit. Thou knowest the parable, how when the invited guests did not appear, the king sent out into the highways and hedges and had gathered together all that could be found, both good and bad, and then was very wroth to discover one among them not clad in a wedding garment. In great indignation he had him bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. Many a scholar has broken his teeth trying to crack this evangelical nut; but the Hoisendorf priest had no difficulty with it, and he expounded it in the following manner:

"You, my Christian audience, may consider this

king a great fool, hastily to invite in the vagabonds from the street, and then to be astonished because one had on no wedding garment. You would have managed it all more cleverly, no doubt! But I will say to you: the Lord Christ was quite right in His parable. He did not mean the outer wedding coat. What does the dear Jesus care for vain show? No, it was the inner garment, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, the virtues, that He meant. And every one of us should be clothed with this wedding garment, at all times and in all places, even when at work in the pastures and fields, for we are well aware that the invitation to the wedding may come at any moment,—ah, you all know what I mean! This festal attire, virtue and good deeds, is, it is true, not the fashion now. Rather is it the fashion to bedeck these bodies of ours with bright colours. Many think that the chief things on Easter Sunday and on other feast days are, not purity of heart, but feathers on our hats; and sometimes there is even a prospective bridegroom among us who will not be married for love, but must needs wait till the new cloth trousers are finished!"

Well, he spoke to the point, to say the least. A few people stared in the direction where the teacher was sitting, but he showed no sign.

Barbel seems to have grown accustomed to waiting for him, and makes nothing of it. So, I will make nothing of it either. Nothing at all—believe me!

This Guido Winter is a v——

A victim of his own indecision!

Forty-fifth Sunday.

Kulmbock's and Adam's family seem like people of a different race, yet they are kinsmen whose common ancestors may be found in the parish register. I wonder who will solve for me this problem of original sin, which in the one case has grown up in easy-going corruption, in the other with a tragic sense of guilt! Tragic sense of guilt! This, as thou hast always said, is its nobler form, and I can show thee an example of it in my Adamshaus.

On All Souls Day the housemother and Barbel lighted a candle and placed it on the father's grave, poured a bottle of holy water upon the mound, and silently prayed a few paternosters before it. Barbel, while on her knees, fell into a revery and did not notice when her mother rose and slowly walked away. At last she began to weep passionately.

I saw it all through the hedge, and as I happened to meet the teacher shortly afterwards, I advised him to go into the churchyard and comfort a certain very sad person whom he would find there.

"Surely I can do that," he replied. And he went and stood beside her a while apparently not knowing how to begin.

"Barbel," he said at length, "why dost thou mourn so? It will do no good. Get up; it is not healthful to kneel on the damp grass."

She rose and walked at his side.

"I want to tell thee something," he said, evidently trying to distract her. "What dost thou say to our having a cow?"

"A cow? Oh, there will be time enough for that," she replied.

"But if we are really to carry out our plan this month, I thought it would be well to buy a milch-cow."

At this she roused herself a little and even laughed once at the idea of their owning live stock. For it was as good as certain about the cow. He had bargained for it over in Wendau, and had made a favourable arrangement for future payments. Then they discussed the details more fully. The creature was of the best age, had recently calved for the first time, and gave a great quantity of milk; three litres a day. He was keeping her temporarily in Nansenhof, but he was going after her to-day. He had just bought a rope at the shop by which to lead her home. Was she spotted? Assuredly, brown and white. What should they call her? Spotty, of course.

"Guido, Guido!" cried Barbel, "now we have a cow!"

"If she were only paid for, though!" he answered musingly.

He is a most peculiar fellow. One moment he is all for honour, the next all for love, and then all for money. It seems, however, that this marriage is at last to be consummated, and it is no longer merely a love story in a novel, but a prosaic reality.

"Perhaps," Guido confided to me later, "I shall give myself up entirely to farming and abandon teaching. To speak frankly, I have no taste for the

latter, and never have had. I do not possess the talents which make a good teacher and I only became one on account of financial pressure. I have been wondering if one might not borrow money from the savings bank and set up a model farm."

Well, well! That would not be a bad plan. A peasant farm! At present, it is true, he has nothing towards it but the cow, and that is not yet paid for. But if he had the desire, and the capital, to show the people of Almgai how such a farm should be managed on modern principles, I would do all in my power to help him. Yet, I must confess, I do not feel exactly hilarious over it.

Later when we returned from church, we found the seamstress established in Adamshaus. She wore an extremely full skirt, reminding one of the days of crinoline, and she wished to make the wedding dress after this pattern. As Barbel had forfeited her right to the white gown and the green wreath, Rosalia proposed fashioning in its place a forget-me-not blue gown with flounces and shirs, ribbons and lace and tiny buttons as decoration; an elegant and tasteful design, as it behooved a schoolteacher's wife to wear. But Barbel insisted on having it cut in peasant fashion. "I have no reason to be vain," she said, "and I need a dress in which I can milk the cows."

"As thou wilt," said the seamstress, good-naturedly, "but I should think thou wouldst want something better. The pretty style costs no more

than the ordinary one and then thou wouldst have a really nice gown. If a girl does not provide a good dress for herself when she marries, she will never get it afterwards, never in all her life! And then one should remember that although at first the husband may be quite liberal, later his purse has seven seals. That is my opinion!"

"Thank thee very much, Rosalia," answered Barbel, "but I will keep to my old fashion."

In the evening when darkness and mist had hidden the mountains, we sat cosily at the table by candle-light, in the midst of the circle, Rosalia, with her material scattered all about her. Franzel was reading aloud, as was the custom on long evenings, from the old household Bible. He read from the fourth chapter of the first Book of Moses.

"'Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

"'And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of the sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

"'And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

"'And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering.

"'But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. . . . And it came to pass, when they

were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.' "

"*Pfui!*" cried the seamstress. "He was a bad brother, this Cain! Canst thou find nothing pleasanter to read than that, boy?"

"Here is the porridge," said the housemother, bringing in the huge tureen of boiled milk, which she carried with both hands and placed on the table.

"That means, I suppose, that I must take away my pretty things," said the seamstress, still in a bad humour, as she cleared the table. Just then the outside door rattled, and through the darkness and smoke a man suddenly burst into the room.

"*Jesus Maria!*" screamed mother and daughter in one breath, "*Jesus Maria*, it is Rocherl!"

And he it was. His clothes, hair and face were in the wildest disorder and he seemed to be greatly agitated; his left hand was clutching his shirt at the neck, his right arm was out of the sling and hanging down. Starting back in terror at sight of his mother and sister, he cowered in the chimney-corner, his groans and sobs resounding throughout the room.

"*Heiliger Gott!* Brother, what does it mean?" cried Barbel. "Thy hand is out of the sling!"

Motioning to her violently to keep at a distance, he buried his face in his arm and groaned so passionately that it went to our very marrow. We gathered about him; we stormed him with questions, asking whence he came and what it all meant. Barbel, weeping, brought water to refresh him.

Then, springing to his feet, he pushed her away so violently that the pitcher fell to the floor and was broken.

"I will not look at thee! Thou art my ruin, thou!" he shrieked. "Thou art my ruin! My ruin! My ruin!"

Our first thought was: a lunatic! The mother took his hand and said: "Child, thou wilt frighten us to death! What has happened? Has some one tried to injure thee? Rocherl, speak! See, thou art at home with us. God knows we have suffered much on thine account, but we will forget it all now that thou art here again. Thou art ill, my boy! Just come and have a good cry, here in my arms, then thou wilt feel better, my dearest child!"

I have never heard this stern woman speak in such a tone before. The young man began to tremble from head to foot; and as he tried to rise, his knees bent under him and he fell prostrate before her: "I do not deserve it, mother!—I only wanted to see—just see you all once more, then I will go wherever they take me. . . ."

"Thou hast—" then she stopped. She had started to ask: "Thou hast not done anything wrong thyself?"

"Mother, I cannot endure it!" he cried, wringing his hands. "Mother, don't look at me like that! Thou wilt not forgive me, I know well; thou couldst not forgive me. But there will come a day when thou wilt forgive. . . ."

We were all silent and stood around like statues. Suddenly the lad became quiet; he rose and, seating himself on a bench, seemed almost calm. Staring fixedly at the floor, he said at length: "Yes, my dear people, God has deserted me. Now I am done for. I did not do it in sudden anger, I did it in the wickedness of my heart. I had been planning it a long time, saying to myself: 'It must be, it must be!' And it was all for her sake! Her sake!" He pointed with his finger at the trembling girl. "For her whom I loved so much! No one in the whole world so much. And for her sake, I must end like this!"

Here the mother started up angrily: "Now, speak out! What has happened?"

"I have shot him!"

Barbel gave one cry, so heartrending that I have heard it every night since. Her face grew hard and livid. Everything about us was as if rigid and frozen, and we were all so paralysed that it seemed to us that the very planets in the heavens must have stopped in their course.

Thou canst picture to thyself the grief; it is beyond me to describe it. It re-echoed throughout the house like an alarum bell. But the tragedy was suddenly averted. The door swung slowly open, and an uncertain voice called in: "Where so much revelry is going on, I think I should like to be too." As if the sounds of grief were those of merriment! Catching sight of Rocherl, who gave a terrific shriek and buried his face in his mother's dress, the man

entering easily guessed why Barbel, laughing and crying at the same moment, sprang so quickly into his arms.

It was not the ghost of the murdered teacher, as Rocherl had supposed, it was Guido himself, the living man.

On this evening of All Souls we have not yet solved the mystery. I need a more quiet hour to write thee the details. I will only say how Rocherl gazed a while at the teacher, to make sure that the pitted face under the fur cap was not an optical illusion. Then, stepping forward, he said in a hard voice: "Thou canst thank God, schoolmaster, that thou art still alive! I have been a fool!"

Guido was very silent and thoughtful. He had apparently only come to complain to us that his life was no longer safe with certain people.

"Go wash thyself, Rocherl," we advised the excited boy.

The lad staggered out to the spring, plunged his head again and again into the cold water. Then he sat down on the trough in the tranquil night. I carried his father's storm cloak out to him: "Put it around thee, Rocherl, it is cold."

"Is it thou, Hansel?" he asked. "Come, stay with me. Thou canst not imagine my feelings or how happy I am not to have killed any one! Only think, I was sure that I had shot him. If it had proved true, then I should be hanged; as it is, it seems as if I should go mad for joy! That is how I feel, my dear Hans!"

Perhaps a third way will be found for him. We have narrowly escaped a terrible tragedy, and that which has happened—rightly viewed—is a whole mountain load of God's mercy that has all at once fallen upon the trembling Adamshaus.

Forty-sixth Sunday.

Now, I have another piece of news for thee, my dear Alfred! We are only just realising the divine miracles which are befalling us; they are much greater than they at first seemed. The hunter, Konrad, has squared his account with Rocherl.

Last Thursday, as I was driving home the cows that graze on the scanty grass out in the pasture, I met the hunter. His expression was good-natured, much more so than usual, and he carried a short pipe between his lips, which he pushed upward with his teeth, as if trying to tap the end of his nose with the top of the metal pipe-cover. He wished me good-day, and inquired if Rocherl had returned home.

"Yes," I answered, "but he has learned altogether too much about shooting from you hunters."

"Perhaps he has given it up now," he said.

"He, when he is such a good shot?"

"He may be a good shot," replied the hunter, "but he loads his gun badly."

I thought the man must have a secret, and as we walked beside each other over the forest path behind the cows, I learned it.

For some time, related Konrad, he had suspected

that Rocherl was plotting something against the teacher. He, Konrad, had taken Rocherl's gun away from him a number of times, but he had always procured another. Before the Feast of All Souls, Rocherl had spent his days up in the vicinity of the Waldheuhütte. At night he would wander through the neighbourhood, sometimes as far down as Hoisendorf, where he would lurk about the schoolhouse like a wild animal. The day before the Feast of All Souls Konrad happened to be over in Wendau at Sackbuttner's, where he had gone to beg a jug of milk from the mistress of the house. While he was drinking it, the teacher from Hoisendorf arrived and bought a cow of Sackbuttner. I will give the rest of the story in the hunter's own words:

"Afterwards, as I was offering the house mistress a few *Kreuzer* for the milk, to which she replied that she would be better pleased with a 'God bless you,' and as we stood a while talking thus by the door, my eye caught sight of Adam's Rocherl, pressing close to the wall and listening through a hole to the teacher as he arranged with Sackbuttner to come for the cow on the afternoon of All Souls' Day. I noticed this—but said nothing. It would be a good thing for the schoolmaster to have a companion on his way home, I thought, and I accompanied him down to Hoisendorf. He was not very social, and was, no doubt, annoyed at the uninvited escort. Or, perhaps he wanted to compose a wedding song on his homeward walk. As for myself, I fared little better in his company. A hunter

and a schoolmaster—I beg to be excused! What could they possibly talk about? I remarked that it was pleasanter for two than for one, since the neighbourhood was rather lonely. 'Well, well,' said the teacher, 'I did not suppose a hunter minded such a thing as loneliness!' And he looked at me askance, as though he would say: 'A hunter, and afraid!' But I put up with the insult. My dear man, I thought, if thou only knewest for whom I am afraid! However, I did not like to say this to him. I might have been mistaken, which would have been even worse than shooting his hand. That is something about which thou must make up thine own mind, hunter, I said to myself, and now thou hast two men to watch over.

"On All Souls' Day I climbed the mountain early in the morning. Rocherl and I were quite used to meeting one another. Not far from the Waldheuhütte I saw him coming towards me, and bits of hay were still clinging to his coat, which proved that he had spent the night in the hut. I asked where he was going so early. But he answered not a word and hastened away. I crawled through the entrance to the hut and saw the depression in the hay where he had slept. And buried under the hay close by I found the gun. It was heavily loaded. So, then, I thought, he has it all ready for the teacher when he shall pass this way! Can it be possible? Is it for hatred on his sister's account, or for something else? Crazy boy! But I will see first how far he really means to go. This time I will not

take the gun away; we will try another joke instead, my dear Rocherl. I have always meant to make good the injury I did thee. I cannot, it is true, extract the bullet from thy hand, but—I can extract it from this gun. It will make a report just the same without the bullet. And that is what I did. I removed the bullet, reloaded the gun with a blank cartridge, and hid it in the hay again. Then I concealed myself in a corner of the hut, where I could look directly upon the path through a crack in the wall; and there I remained the entire day, constantly saying to myself: Nonsense! Why should the boy shoot the teacher? The lead was probably meant for a deer, which he has tracked in the pasture. He has not given up poaching yet. Well, that also comes within my province.

"At about noon, as I was putting a piece of bacon on my bread, he approached stealthily, crawled into the hut, and over the hay to the gun. Concealed in my corner, I could see him distinctly. He tried to make himself comfortable in the hay, but could not rest. He supported the injured hand on his elbow, and stared through the entrance at the path on which his eyes seemed to be riveted. A few crows flew in, perched on the beam, pecked for insects, and flew out again, cawing to each other in the trees. Otherwise all was silent. Then, something stirred among the larch-trees and it proved to be the schoolmaster. He had a rope thrown across one shoulder and he was carrying a stick in his hand. He was going after his cow.

"Rocherl straightened himself erect and lifted the gun with his left hand. The devil, thought I, it is in earnest after all! Then a shout of merry laughter reached our ears—children's laughter. Two schoolboys were running after the teacher. They were probably on their way home from church. They had caught a large beetle which wriggled in their fingers, and they wished to show it to the schoolmaster to ask what kind it was.

"'Simpletons!' he said, 'you ought surely to know the stag-beetle! So, little fellow,' he said, addressing the beetle, 'thou hast had a nice long sleep this year, but now Winter has got thee in his clutches!' Then they passed on, the teacher and the children, and disappeared behind the slope. The gun had not been fired. Rocherl, foolish boy, beat his head with his fist in his rage and disappointment. Now he would be obliged to wait until the schoolmaster returned, and he did not let the gun go out of his hand again.

"So we began our watch once more. It was well for me that I was used to it. I was curious to know what was in the boy's mind, what he was planning to do, what it all meant and what would be the consequences. But he betrayed nothing. I knew well, how, when lying in wait, one's whole heart and soul are in the gun-stock, while watching for the opportunity to pull the trigger. All at once a deer came down the wooded slope, stepping daintily and nibbling the withered heather. It occurred to me, Rocherl may think better of it. A shot is a

shot. But, no, he has more important game in view this time.

"When it finally began to grow dark, the young man stamped impatiently with his feet. His eyes blazed like those of a panther. Then he started, for he had heard something. From the direction of Wendau the teacher was approaching with his cow. He was leading her by the rope and in the other hand he carried a birch-rod with which to drive her. 'Come along, Spotty,' he said, as they drew near, and just as I had made up my mind that nothing was going to happen, I heard a report. The creature jumped to one side, and the teacher fell to the ground. Damn it! What is the reason for that? I thought. For a moment Rocherl stood motionless with terror, then he gave one loud cry. Man, what a cry it was! I have never heard one like it in all my life. He then made a wild dash through the opening of the hut and was gone. I, too, was startled when the teacher fell, but as I went out to the path he was already on his feet and off with the cow. The frightened animal had thrown him down when she sprang aside,—and further than this there is nothing to tell. Only that afterwards I saw Rocherl running over the Abachleiten, apparently in the greatest despair. I never had anything do me so much good as his despair. Yes, my boy, I thought, that is wholesome for thee, if it is not too unchristian. I called after him: 'Rocherl, listen! Now we are quits. Two human lives for one hand! I think it is paid for at

last.' But he did not hear me and fled like a wild creature."

So, my friend! And this was the hunter, Konrad. I would not have believed it of him. I would not have believed that such men existed on earth. This miracle was necessary to save our poor boy, and the rest of us with him. God knows the lad is changed since then—quite changed!

P. S.—Thou wilt consider me out of my senses, one of those incurable maniacs who suddenly grow so cheerful that they can do nothing but laugh even at tragedy and sorrow. The turns of fortune which strike Adamshaus are indeed enough to upset one's equilibrium. Just as I was closing the above letter, Rocherl came to me in a perfect ecstasy of joy, holding something between his fingers and swinging it to and fro, at the same time crying: "It is out! It is out! The bullet!"

"Why, of course," I said, "Konrad took it out for thee."

"I don't mean that one!" he answered excitedly. "This is what I mean. The one which was in my hand!"

Since that eventful All Souls' Day it seems that the injured hand, which all old Marenzel's plasters and salves had failed to cure, had been paining him more than usual. The wound had reopened and was suppurating. Barbel had carefully bandaged it for him every day. This morning as he was taking off the bandage, something fell out on the floor. A

tiny, long bit of lead, and Rocherl insisted that his hand pained him no longer. I beg thee, Alfred, to ask some doctor if it be possible that a shock, such as terror or some like emotion, could have any effect in drawing out bullets. If not, then I am greatly puzzled, for the bullet is out!

Forty-seventh Sunday.

In the rush of events my descriptions and reports have left the beaten track. They are no longer Sunday letters, but a veritable romance, a chapter of which is written every week.

To-day it is *adagio* with me. As the year grows shorter, the work is confined almost entirely to the house, barns, and stable. We have only been to the woods with the sledge for fire-wood, as we have had snow for some time. In doing this I very awkwardly stepped on a log buried in the snow and sprained my left ankle, so that Rocherl was obliged to drag me home on the sledge. And for days I have been lying in my little room, in the dim light and the moist atmosphere of the stable. Friend, it has been dreary! Barbel brings me my food and does what is necessary, but then she goes away again at once. She might indeed have a little more charity for an invalid! She wanted to send old Marenzel to me with her plasters and advice; but I told her that cold compresses were better than warm counsel and if the sprained ankle had nothing else to do, it would heal of itself—for very *ennui*.

This experience has also taught me to know what

a November evening is like, a solitary, endless November evening. On one of these evenings, my friend, I was suddenly seized with homesickness for —the city! It was homesickness in its worst form, mingled with pricks of conscience for having said and written so much against modern civilisation. The sky is beginning to clear above Adamshaus, with the crippled son recovering, and a wedding close at hand. Yet, in spite of all, how poor and miserable they are! If there were only a little culture added for their intellectual enjoyment! An attractive mountain farmhouse, built in Swiss fashion, furnished in old German style, with a kitchen range and a Swedish oven, a book-case, and a piano—may Heaven pardon me!—yes, a piano also! Then, comfortable beds with feather pillows, and excellent food, prepared *à la Française!* Would such an innovation be so bad? And here in my room a sofa, furnace heat, and a little electric light. But first of all, a doctor to examine my foot to find out if it is sprained or broken!

Dear Alfred, I will be silent when the question again arises which is preferable, the old-fashioned peasant's lack of requirements or modern civilisation. I will tacitly acknowledge that culture and industry must first sanctify and purify the products of nature, to make them useful to mankind. I will assent to the advantages of a happy mean between country and city life. I will even sometimes sing the praises of commerce, and I will call the peasant's farm a little State, and the State a large farm; for

there is production and consumption, and the values rise and fall, the same in the one as in the other. That which the railway is to the State, the peasant's cart is to the farm. It carries the produce from the field to the barn, thence to the mill, thence to the oven, and at each station the value rises. It is a civilisation *en miniature*, but capable of increasing in size and importance. I am sure the only thing needed is to include the peasantry in the general development. This done, a city man would not wait for a wager of twenty thousand *Kronen* before he became a resident of the country for one year; he would do it for nothing, or pay something for the privilege; because, not until culture is surrounded by nature are the deepest joys of existence made possible. And when we succeed in combining the old-fashioned integrity and loyalty with the modern capability of enjoyment and lack of prejudice, then an age will have dawned which will be endurable!

And the man who from day to day records and wisely counsels the people living in this golden age — will be the brave-hearted journalist, who thus raises his calling to its ideal greatness, until it becomes the university and history of mankind.

Thy remark that, in spite of my flight from journalism, I have remained a journalist, who is writing a weekly article from a peasant's home, has encouraged me. Thou art indeed right; for any one who, enduring all kinds of privations and physical labour, cannot leave off writing, is most assuredly a writer! And why should I not be one? Every calling would

be good if the right man were in it. The right man ennobles even the office of hangman. The old executioner, Nöllendorffer, a tender-hearted, mild-tempered nature, kind and gentle towards every one, was the best hangman of his age. He once made the following remark: "The execution of one's fellow men is the most difficult task required by the State. I have undertaken it, because some one must do it, and because another would perhaps be harsher with the unfortunate ones than I." So even a hangman may be a hero. In a certain sense the journalist is often obliged to perform executions, although his chief business should be not pulling down but building up. I should like to read the inspired book which some enlightened man will write a hundred years hence on the work of civilisation accomplished by journalism. Perhaps this book, when summing up the subject, will close with the following sentence: "When journalism lost its way in the fathomless sea of theories, principles, and fantasies, it weakened, grew characterless, and became a prey to charlatanism; but when it once more stood upright and honest on the ground of the people, it became a factor in morality and well-being!"

Since my injured foot cannot at present stand on any ground, my head is doing its best to gather together all the good things possible to lighten the heart of an old bachelor of thirty-seven. Ah, if one could only carry out one's desires! A stately farmhouse in the midst of beautiful mountain scenery; good connections with the city; a fresh

young wife to preside over the house; also to work energetically one's self in field and pasture, in forest and garden; and on Sundays to devote one's time to the æsthetic side of life, and perhaps write a little—then, my friend, it would be a pleasure to live!

During the building of such air-castles as these, my foot is healing and soon it must make ready to dance. But what has become of the wedding? Week after week passes and we hear nothing. The tailor, Setznagel, surely has the outer covering ready now, but where is the man to wear it?

This question was answered yesterday by a letter which Franzel brought me from the teacher. As it is not long, although most instructive, I will copy it for thee. The teacher writes:

"Dear Hans:

"Since the occurrence of the recent events, which are well known to thee, it will be impossible for me to remain longer in Hoisendorf. I have no desire to trust my life to the vagaries of a fool, who believes in showing his feelings for his future brother-in-law by means of powder and lead. I have found a temporary substitute and I shall leave to-morrow to look for means of livelihood elsewhere. With the aid of one or another of my friends I should be able to succeed. It is therefore a matter of course that my marriage with Barbel must be postponed until after New Year's. I feel forced to this step by dire necessity and also by my desire to fulfil my duty to her, and to provide a better home for her than would be possible in the schoolhouse at Hoisendorf. At the same

time please say to my future wife that I will return and keep my promise to her as soon as possible.

"In the meantime, with best wishes for the speedy recovery of thine injured foot and with many friendly greetings,

"Thine affectionate friend,

"GUIDO WINTER.

"Hoisendorf, Nov. 20, 1897."

So this is what the teacher writes! I was filled with curiosity to see Barbel's face when she brought me my next meal. But the housemother came herself that evening. The question was on my tongue's end to ask whether the girl were indisposed, but I could not bring myself to ask it.

The next Sunday Barbel came again and brought me dumplings and cabbage. Her face was bright and her laugh was like a silver bell; she inquired about my foot and expressed a hope that I might soon be able to come into the house, where it would be less lonely; then she hastened away.

Inside in the warm living-room, where the white winter day looks silently in at the windows, where Barbel sits sewing and singing her little songs, serious and gay! Less lonely, she thinks! Ah, thou unsuspecting angel!

Forty-eighth Sunday.

It gives me pleasure to inform thee of the progress of our "affair." The last letter from my lawyer contained a description of a call which he had made on Dr. Stein, with the intention of getting at his

opinion on the matter in a diplomatic way. But it seems he was not successful in this. Whenever the conversation involuntarily turned upon me, the chief changed the subject. The most important thing he said about me was to call me "a queer fellow," at the same time shrugging his shoulders and drumming on the table with his fingers, which drumming is always meant as a sign for the visitor to leave. My obtuse lawyer, however, did not go, but asked Dr. Stein von Stein the straightforward question when he intended to settle the wager with this "queer fellow." The contracting party was desirous of knowing that he might arrange his plans accordingly.

"Ah, yes, the wager!" answered the chief, "it will be some time before that is due." Then politely, but decidedly, he added: "You will please excuse me now, my dear doctor; the last post requires my attention. Alas! I am a newspaper slave."

To which my lawyer replied: "Unfortunately, I am not satisfied with your answer that there is no haste in the matter. I am—to speak frankly—commissioned to come to a clear understanding of the question."

"In what way?" he asked. "First, I should say that we must let the year come to an end to see if Herr Trautendorffer wins the wager, and second, find out whether I may not bring up objections on my side of the question. As far as I know, you have already had a conversation about it with Herr

Lobensteiner, to make sure of him as a witness. What—if I may be allowed to ask—gives you the right to mistrust me, if you are so sure of your legal point?"

"My client has heard certain rumours which disturb him."

"Perhaps with good reason!" said Dr. Stein. "You will remember that Lobensteiner, your chief witness, has given you the text of the wager? Good. The jest, as I recall it, went so far as to require the contracting party to serve an entire year as a peasant farmhand, that is, from the first of January to the last of December of the current year. I have in my possession letters wherein Trautendorffer himself recounts that nearly the whole month of January passed before he found a situation. Granted that the wager were intended in earnest, the conditions have been so far from being carried out that I cannot comprehend how any one can speak of obligation on my part. And I should be very glad to have you submit the case to the jurisdiction of the courts."

Thus, my friend and philosopher, do we stand with our twenty thousand *Kronen*. Thou wast very imprudent with thy loan to me, and I was very imprudent to hope to re-establish peasants' farms with this money, to assist schoolmasters' families, and God knows what all! It is true, my agent writes me that he is not yet willing to let this fox escape him. The legal prosecution will depend upon whether the money is paid when due, and that is

not until January, 1898. The lawsuit will dangle along for a number of years, and I shall become like the celebrated Michael Kohlhaas. I am not longing for such a reputation. The devil take it all! I am already up to my neck in water, or the opposite, which is just the same, I am buried in sand in the midst of a desert. My possessions are pawned, and now I must warn my best friend in the most impressive way possible never again to lend me any money. Only consider this foolish chum of thine! He has let his journalistic career go to the winds and has fallen in love with a peasant maid, without houses and lands, and what is more—he is about to marry her!

Now, my Alfred, prepare thyself for what is coming. To-day, this morning, while the family were in church, I decided that I might risk using my foot to cross the yard into the house, to keep Barbel company, who was obliged to remain home alone. It went fairly well. She was busy as usual. A few days ago the housemother had killed a sheep, and the girl was melting the fat in a saucepan over the fire, and pouring it into candle-moulds, through which the wicks had already been drawn. She then hung the filled cylinders out of the window, where the tallow hardened in a few moments, and the smooth, milk-white candles were ready to be removed from the moulds. She did this as deftly and daintily, as if it were her profession. These people can do everything they undertake. A genuine peasant's home is surely the cradle of all

production and industry; a genuine peasant is a man through and through!

As Barbel saw me limping in with the cane—it was the handle of a flail—she laughed and said that I could run once more like a weasel.

"Or like a snail, thou mightest say, if I only had a little house."

"How nice that would be," she replied, "if we could carry our houses about with us on our backs!"

"Barbel, that would not be nice at all! Just think, if we had room for only one—for only one!"

To this she made no reply, and we were both silent. I watched her at her work, until, at last, it being necessary to say something, I inquired if she were making candles for the wedding.

"Does one need candles at a wedding?" she asked.

"Why, certainly, for the dance afterwards."

And that was all. She finished her task, put away the things, and went into her room. I sat alone, wondering how one should really begin that which I had in my mind. As she did not return, I went out of doors, and through the window I saw her kneeling before the table, reading the service, as is the custom for those who remain at home from church. Why did she not allow me to join her? What had she against me? Then, all at once, I felt so dreary! So dreary and so alone!

Chiding myself for my passing mood, I thought, how pious Hans Trautendorffer is becoming all at once, to feel hurt if he is not invited to join in the service! I re-entered the living-room and walked

over to the fireplace where the wood is kept, and taking down the knife, which hangs over it, I began to cut tapers. Later Barbel returned also and commenced preparations for dinner, at the same time remarking: "Thou art making tapers, Hans?"

"Yes," I answered, "when one cannot pray, one must consecrate Sunday with work."

"Idleness is good for no one, even on Sunday," she answered; "that is why I made the candles."

"Thou hast made candles and I tapers! Then we surely ought to be able to see things clearly!"

As she laid the kindling-wood on the hearth, she remarked that one needed neither candles nor tapers to be able to see some things.

I could hold out no longer. "Confound it, Barbel, tell me how matters are going! We shall soon have to order the wedding decorations, shall we not?"

At first I thought she was not going to reply, but then she said: "There is no haste about that, my dear Hans."

"It is reported that it is postponed again."

"That may be," she said.

"For how long this time?"

"I do not know," she answered quietly.

Then I plunged my knife into the wood, scattering the splinters in all directions.

"When one has grown accustomed to waiting one does not ask many questions," she continued and then added, "It really ought never to take place!"

Here a silence followed on both sides. Rising

from the block, I walked about the room and our eyes met a few times.

"The devil take this cursed procrastination!" suddenly burst from my lips. "He puts it off from one month to another, and now he has even run away!"

"He probably has something to do outside."

"It seems he wishes to change his profession."

"He is right there."

"What if he were no better fitted for the matrimonial calling than he is for that of teacher?" I said.

She was silent.

"The man ought at least to know what he wants," I cried.

She blew the sparks in the fire, and as her delicate face reflected the glow, she said: "I think he is no longer in earnest about it."

"Barbel, the sparks will fly into thine eyes if thou blowest them with so much force!"

She laid on more kindling and replied: "He is always talking about his duty. If it is nothing but that, one can take back a promise."

Then I stopped in my walk directly in front of her.

"Barbel! If you two people are not in sacred earnest, then, let it go! In marriage one has a choice, in love one has none!"

She broke the sticks violently, and I noticed the trembling of her body.

"That which thou hast just said, Hans——"

"That one had no choice in love?"

"I know some one who has experienced it."

"I, too, know such a person!" And then I remembered how the man whom I meant had in his younger days played with love, and boasted of love, but he had never known it until he had experienced sorrow and pity.

"My heart bleeds for thee, thou true, loyal girl," I cried suddenly, "I would do anything in the world for thee! Barbel, if this be love—and thou canst not care for me—then all is over with me!"

In some such way I must have spoken. The words are ringing in my ears still. And she? She did not resist, but laid her head back on my arm and our lips met in one long, delicious kiss.

Thus it has happened, friend Alfred, and now she is mine!

Forty-ninth Sunday.

I have hardly yet come to myself since the shock of joy, this sudden flaring up of the flames which have been smouldering so long under the ashes! She did not even ask me who I really was. But a confession soon escaped her lips.

"On the very first day I saw that thou wast not a peasant born, but I also saw that thou wast a good man, and the whole time I thought I should die of shame, because I could not care so much for Guido as I did for thee."

"And that is why thou wast so sad and wouldst not laugh?"

"Not for that alone. Thou knowest why, my Hans."

And she did not ask me what I had to offer her, or what her fate would be at my side. Such heavenly carelessness! But the housemother took a more practical view of the case. She showed no alarm when I announced our engagement that same evening.

"This Barbel is a shrewd one!" she said to me. "Because the first man has run away, she takes the other one. I never should have dreamed it of the girl, but, since she must have a husband, it is more sensible for her to marry a peasant than the gentleman schoolmaster."

A peasant! And she added that we might have the little house on the meadow behind the grove fitted up and then we could work around on the farm. That is her arrangement and the entire program for my future. Ah, well, the trap has sprung, and Hansel is caught fast!

Tuesday evening we held a great family council. At table I was given the seat where Adam had died, and it made cold shivers run up and down my spine. I was to fill his place and I did not delay long before making my suggestions. They were veritable commandments from Mt. Sinai! Count them and see if there are ten!

Valentin, when he returns from the army, is not to go out into the wheel-factory, or into the paper-mill in Grabacher, where so many men are working; he is to stay at home, and, as eldest son, take

charge of the farm. Rocherl, instead of becoming herdsman in Wendau, as he has been planning for a long time, shall stay at home and become head farmhand, for at the end of the year I shall give up the situation. Now he can use both hands and the regular work will soon dispose of the fantasies of his restless brain. Franzel is to go for three years to the agricultural school at Grottung, and then he, too, is to return to the farm. These three brothers must cling to each other like the fibre of an uncleft larch-log. The wheat culture is to be abandoned, and only vegetables raised: potatoes, cabbages, cauliflower, turnips, carrots, and lettuce. The fields are to be turned into pastures and meadows; a stock farm is to be started with thirty or forty head of cattle. Sheep and goats will be given up, but a few pigs will be kept for family consumption. A dairy business is to be begun in combination with the neighbours, who must be carefully selected and instructed how to co-operate. Young forests must be planted, especially larches, as many as will grow. The taxes on the forest are low, the labour is light, and with good management it will bring in a nice little income every year. "He who is already in the harness must begin to pull!" I said encouragingly to my people. They looked at me with uncertain glances, wondering if I were really in earnest. I was not quite sure of it myself. Parts of my speech bore a fatal resemblance to my former articles on political economy in *The Continental.*

"*Mein Gott!*" sighed the housemother, "if one

could only know what Adam would say to it all!"

Rocherl remarked: "When it were once started, it might be very fine. But to begin! How shall we begin?"

"Have I already told you the most important thing?" I continued. "No? Have I not yet told you the most important thing of all? What a distracted simpleton I am, to be sure! There will come a day when our dear housemother will want to rest, and then the young proprietor should look out for a good wife, who will help begin."

"But, Hansel," cried Rocherl, all at once laying his hand on my shoulder, "what art thou going to do, thou and Barbel? I should like to know!"

"We? Barbel and I? Why, what should we be going to do? We are going to have the little house on the meadow cleaned and furnished for the summer and autumn. In the spring and winter we will live in Kailing. It is beautiful there also; or perhaps even in a city, if we feel inclined."

The housemother replied: "O Hansel, art thou no wiser than that?"

"For a long time you all must have known that I am an enchanted city gentleman. A rich man sent me to Almgai and promised me much money if I would serve you a whole year as farmhand."

"It is an impudent lie!" declared the housemother.

"That the rich man promised me much money for the year's service is indeed true, but whether he

will pay it—there the lie may come in. And if he does not, no matter, for I can earn our bread with my pen. Can I not, Barbel?"

The housemother looked as if she had suddenly fallen from the sky. She clasped her hands speechless. And when she could finally use her tongue once more, she insisted on hearing it all over again. "With the pen, did he say? Children, I do not know whether I am the fool or he! A writer! Perhaps even a newspaper writer! Oh, if he were that! If he were that! No, I should repent of it afterwards, and it must not be! It most certainly must not be! That would be sure to make trouble! *No*, I say!"

Then began a lively controversy, and the mother grew more and more angry. The children took my part, explaining to her how honest and good Hansel had been the whole year.

"So," she cried, "honest and good indeed! He has been a living falsehood. To pretend to be a farmhand when he is not one; that is pure deceit. And thou mayest as well know it at once, Hansel. Thy year is at an end. Pack up thy things and go!"

Then I feared that our hopes were really shattered. Barbel stood there like a statue. But here Rocherl interfered and laid siege to his mother. He has been a different man since All Souls' Day, and which of the two bullets has produced the greater effect it would be difficult to say. Sometimes he flashes up even now, and if a fiery word escapes his lips, a look from his mother is sufficient

to quiet him; and when he says something sensible she listens to him. He said that, for his part, he was very glad it was Hansel instead of the teacher who was going to marry his sister; and with this remark he approached his mother. He spoke to her of their dead father, who had long known about the farmhand from distant parts, and how he had been all the more grateful that a stranger, and such a man, should willingly bear so much misery and want in order to stand by them in their trouble. And once the father had said that although Hansel might be very awkward about some of the work, yet he was so good that he might sue for the hand of any man's daughter and it would not be denied him.

This turn in the conversation proved effectual. Adam had knocked at the door, and thus my house-father, who had been resting in his grave for weeks, interceded for me and at the same time gave me his fatherly blessing.

We sat up for half the night discussing various matters and the housemother became very gentle and thoughtful. She said that I must have come straight out of a fairy-tale, and she was dumb with astonishment at the things that were happening in the world nowadays.

Our wedding day is set for the 12th of December. We will have no long delay this time. The priest makes only one condition to our having the ceremony during Advent, and this is, that no festivities should be connected with it. But that is quite in accord with our own wishes. Where there is happi-

ness, why should there be a merry-making? As for the rest, everything is arranged with the authorities. I am anxious that it shall be concluded as quickly as possible, on the teacher's account, as thou wilt understand, before his return, if he ever does return. I should not care to have him for a wedding guest.

And thou, my loyal friend, do me the favour not to mention my intended marriage to anyone. There might be frivolous-minded acquaintances who would come, and on that day I wish only the family present. In regard to thy last offer,—for which Heaven bless thee,—I have already ordered some things in Kailing, especially a suit of clothes, a "city peasant's suit," or in good German: a travelling costume. We will try and restore the fellow to his original form as well as we can. And then he will make his escape. The rogue has been praising the peasant class until at last he runs away from it. But they do not need me now. That which I said to the housemother on Tuesday before having considered it, I have considered since. If nothing comes of the wager, then I know how to make a living with my pen. Well, why not? Just now I feel as if I could do anything.

Fiftieth Sunday.

I could not even think of writing letters on this day. Instead the young husband, in his happy, peaceful frame of mind, will give thee a retarded account of how everything has come to pass.

There has not been a button's worth of work

done at Adamshaus for three days. And all over Gai the peasants have been drinking as they have not done since the time of Noah's ark. It may have been the height of bliss for some, but it ended in a night of misery for others. The blacksmith, slapping his knees, sang the following song for the occasion, which amused me greatly:

" *Jauchzen thut heut' Leib und Seel,*
Bruderherz, gar kreuzfidel
Geht's bei uns her,
Traurig sein, das giebt's ja net,
Fünf und sechs ist siebenzehne,
Oder noch mehr! "
(With body and soul we rejoice to-day,
Brother-heart, hurrah, hurray!
Merry indeed are we,
Sad and solemn we could not be,
Five and six make seventeen,
Or still more!)

This gives an idea of the spirit of the wedding which was supposed to have no merry-making connected with it.

And now to the chief incidents. We started from Adamshaus on Sunday, Barbel wearing her forget-me-not blue gown, and about her shoulders a red silk shawl which her mother had worn on her wedding day. Her blond hair was braided in a coronet on top of her head, as the artist Defregger paints his Tyrolian peasant maids. Thus she stood at the door and said in an anxious voice:

"It is harder for me than I thought it would be."

I, too, noticed this. She was evidently thinking of Guido, for she added: "It is true we have been indifferent to one another for some time, but we have never confessed it to each other. And now, while he is away, I am to follow someone else to the altar. It seems so unfaithful, so unfaithful!"

To which I replied: "Dear child, the faithlessness, if any exists, lies with him, in that he never came to say good-bye to thee before going away. And since then things have changed so much, and thou owest him nothing any longer. As two people take each other of their own free will so may they leave one another of their own free will."

And she replied: "I cannot say as to the first. It had to happen so. But I really think it makes no difference to him what I do now. If I could only go up to him and say: 'Guido, God bless thee!'"

Sobbing softly into her handkerchief she walked by my side. Her brothers also walked with us. Here, however, Kulmbock, as "wedding father," interfered, telling us that it was very bad form for the bridal couple to walk to the church together. That was a pretty way to do! A wedding managed thus was no wedding at all! The bride should walk behind! And, think of it, in order to follow their old customs, poor Barbel, on her wedding day, was obliged to go entirely alone behind all the rest. Then, when the others were inside of the church, she still remained before the door, waiting until the

wedding father should lead her in to the altar where Hansel stood ready to receive her. This unchivalrous custom is to show the lowliness of the woman before her husband chooses her and raises her to his rank!

How strict their regulations in regard to women at marriages are, is shown by another custom, forbidding the future mother-in-law to be present at the ceremony. At the feast she may sit back in the chimney-corner; and then—only listen! she is supposed to remain away from the young couple an entire year. Now wilt thou not have respect for the Almgaiers, since they understand disposing of the question of the mother-in-law so neatly? But wait and see who is the stronger. As Kulmbock was about to forbid the housemother to enter the church, she said decidedly: "A mother stay away from her child! I think not!" and pushing Kulmbock aside with her arm she entered.

"Very well, then," said the master of ceremonies, "but it is unprecedented!" For the time being he represents the whole law.

At the altar burned only two candles; there were no church decorations, no flowers. It is late in the year. What my feelings were as this dear creature stood at my side, as we exchanged rings, and as we each pronounced the word "Yes,"—that, my friend, I cannot describe. He who has not experienced it could never understand it.

After the ceremony was over and as we started to enter the inn, we found the door closed. Kulm-

bock knocked with his staff and we heard the sound of laughter within, but the door remained shut. Then he began to recite a variety of unintelligible verses and proverbs through the key-hole. I think they were in reference to the virtues and worth of the young newly married pair who were demanding entrance; but still the door did not open. Here my Barbel came forward and touched it with a branch of white-pine which had been placed in her hand, and then it opened slowly and we were allowed to enter.

The repast was a very simple one. In comparative silence the guests ate their portions of sandwiches and cake, or put them away in their pockets. We noticed that Kulmbock had a toast ready but was waiting for the wine to be brought. We drank cider and no wine was ordered. Outside it was snowing hard and fast growing dark. Barbel kept looking at me, and then said quite softly that it would be hard going home in the night, by which she meant it would be better to go while it was still day, and to this I heartily agreed. Just as we were getting our things together, the belated guests began to arrive. As the first one appeared—it was our neighbour, Gleimer—the host lighted two lamps. Gleimer brought an iron kettle which he silently placed before the bride. Soon, to our great surprise, others came. There were peasants from far and near, from all over the parish. They looked like snow-men as they entered. The weather had grown wild and the wind drove the snow into the

hall. Then we seated ourselves once more at the table. Each guest had brought a wedding gift. The women presented Barbel with various household provisions, and their bags and baskets were filled with flour, lard, eggs, and pastry. The shoemaker, Zwegel, brought me a woollen cap knit by himself; the tailor, Setznagel, gave me a pair of wool slippers as a sign that he had forgiven and forgotten, and now solicited my patronage. Kulmbock, unable to contain himself longer, ordered wine. And when all the glasses were filled, he broke forth. He spoke in an ecclesiastical tone, referring back to Adam and Eve. He made allusions which unfortunately did not have a double meaning, because the significance was so plain. Sooner than I expected, thank God, he came to the brilliant ending: "*Der Bräutigam soll leben und die Braut daneben!*" ("Long live the groom and the bride at his side!")

The speech was hardly over when a great tumult arose in the hall. The buglers and fiddlers had arrived. Kulmbock took off his damp loden-cloth coat and went about in his flowing shirt-sleeves, inviting the guests to eat and drink. He became quite witty, exclaiming with every other sentence: "I 'll eat no fried potatoes!"

Still the people continued to arrive with gifts. Sackbuttner brought a tin bell for the cow which he had sold to the teacher, supposing that it was the teacher's wedding. Schragerer's gift was a brand-new milking-stool which he had made himself. The

hunter, Konrad, who, to make the peace final and conclusive, had been chosen as witness to the marriage ceremony, presented us with a fox-skin, "to lay before Barbel's bed." The seamstress, Rosalia, was very mysterious about her gift. She unwrapped it carefully from a little snow-white cloth and held it towards Barbel by the stem. It was a large red-cheeked apple. The dear couple might eat anything they chose, said the seamstress, only they must not nibble this apple. "And I will explain why," she added; "whoever eats this apple will ruin his digestion." She spoke wisely, for the large apple proved to be a wooden box containing a tiny mirror, a pair of finger-nail scissors, and a corn-plaster.

I laughed hilariously with the rest and thanked here and there. My poor girl sat like a statue of the Madonna and calmly endured it all. The housemother was gradually becoming unmanageable. She disapproved of the musicians in the midst of Advent. The whole affair was repulsive to her, and even though it might "snow glass" she insisted on returning home. She had just lighted the lantern which the inn-keeper had lent us, when —friend, how can I help it if Chance is sometimes so well disposed? Thou wouldst say: "Chance does not make romances." Yes, old man, it makes many a one—purely by chance.

The hostess opened the door and said in a loud voice: "Now I deserve a 'God bless you' for opening the door!"

We gazed out into the dark hall, the musicians

flourished their trumpets — and there he stood! Valentin, in full uniform, with helmet and sword at his side, his snow-covered mantle thrown back, so that the brass buttons on his broad breast flashed like two rows of merry eyes. He was indeed a different sort of man from the one who came last summer. His red face was beaming with smiles, and he gazed frankly about him like a conqueror. Hands and glasses were extended towards him from all sides, but he forced his way through the crowd to the table of honour, to his mother and brothers and sister. My hand he shook the last of all and he held it the longest.

"This time it is different, Hansel!" he said, laughing.

"And with us also!" I replied.

"With you most decidedly!" he answered, looking towards Barbel, then he added, "Thou art right there! I heard of it first in Kailing."

"We did not write to thee for fear of another escapade."

"One grows wiser," was his reply.

For the present nothing more was said about returning home. And the merry-making began in earnest. Even the housemother sipped a glass of wine and clapped her hands, saying: "What extravagant people you all are!" I think she meant it for a eulogy.

Kulmbock declared from time to time that he would eat "no fried shoe-nails."

"Nor I either!" retorted Valentin, while he de-

voured a plateful of roast pork with good appetite. Then followed the stories of his life in barracks, of his marches, of his friends, of his officers, especially the colonel, who had said to him: "Weiler, as long as you are afflicted with this cursed homesickness, you must stay with the regiment. When you get back that full-moon face with which you came here two years ago, you may have a furlough—not before." This had made a deep impression on Valentin, and his returning cheerfulness really brought back the full-moon face in about the same time it takes the new moon to get hers.

It was long after midnight when we took our leave of the company, already becoming hilarious from the effects of the new wine, and started on our homeward way towards Adamshaus. Snow-flakes filled the air, the pale moon shone dimly, and the wind whistled through the trees. Valentin escorted his mother on his arm, Rocherl and Franzel walked together, and my wife and I.

As we approached the house, my way did not take me as usual across the yard to the cold stall-chamber. I entered the house with the others and went with Barbel into our own warm little room.

Fifty-first Sunday.

Bad luck in play, good fortune in love! The proverb is something like that, I believe. It has proved true in my case.

Although I had not read *The Continental* for some time, I had noticed that it was appearing in

a larger size of late. "Death is stretching it," the teacher said. And now thou writest me that it has happened. The paper has gone to smash and the editor has run away! Thus my affair is settled most conclusively.

All the more does thy proposal interest me. Thou thinkest that I should publish my Sunday letters from Adamshaus? Thou sayest that they would surely attract attention. Art thou really in earnest? While I supposed that I was a farmhand from distant parts, who was making himself useful, I was in reality an author! A little like Zola, who is said to have collected his material from contact with the masses, and his stories certainly live, imbued as they are with his own personality. But I am ahead of him, for not to my knowledge did he marry a peasant girl in his *La Terre*. What a famous fellow I am, to be sure!

But, to be serious, if thou shouldst really find a publisher for my Sunday letters and wilt give thyself the trouble to arrange them for publication—I agree. The thought makes me a little uncomfortable that in the future I shall parade among the ten thousand for the most part starving German heroes of the pen. Ten thousand! I wonder if to-day there are as many peasants as that in all Germany! Well, if my immortal name comes to nothing, I will be content with the position of night-watchman, and with the title of "poor father of a family." What an astonishing thing it is that I am so suddenly married!

It is a question if I leave here at all. A new courage and a new life now animate Adamshaus. The boys and I work from morning till night in the woods. Valentin seems to take hold of it in the right way. He has already sold twelve old larch-trees for a good sum of money. Now they are being cut and taken on sledges to the valley. Rocherl has come to his senses and is well again, physically and mentally. Franzel gives us a bad report of the new schoolmaster, saying that he is far too strict, and one has to study much more for him than for Guido Winter.

Mother and daughter reign in the house and yard. These December days are always full of great preparations for Christmas. Even in the stalls the cobwebs are brushed down from the walls with long brooms. The cows are carefully washed, their hoofs and horns trimmed, and the floor of the stable is strewn with litter fragrant of the woods. About the house the firewood is stacked in little heaps; the furniture inside is scoured; the walls are freshly whitewashed; the window-panes and picture-glass cleaned with fine ashes. The housemother, in her fury for scouring, has rubbed the figures off from the old Black Forest clock, so that Barbel, at this very moment, is drawing them in again with charcoal. The brass hands glisten like sunshine. Usually they spin the autumn fleece in the evening, but now as the Christmas festival is drawing near, they have put away the spinning, "that the whirring wheel may not waken the Christ-child

from its sleep." For the same reason we must all go about in the evening on tip-toe, to avoid making any kind of noise.

Shall I let thee take a peep into our little room? Well then, dear man, look! The table is covered with a red cloth, on which stands a jar containing budding cherry-branches. They were picked on St. Barbara's Day, Barbel's name day, and they should bloom on Christmas eve. The two bright windows are hung with snow-white curtains, daintily made and embroidered with monograms by her own hand. The beds stand side by side and are covered with a sky-blue spread dotted with tiny red flowers. We withdraw into our little apartment after supper is over, and if thou caredst to listen—although one ought not to be guilty of that—thou couldst hear her cheerful laughter for a long time.

On Thursday Valentin gave me permission to go to Kailing. We have a number of purchases to make, and besides, there is an attractive little country villa to rent, standing amid fresh gardens directly on the banks of the river Rechen. I did not rent it, I merely looked at it, walked around it and thought: If I only could rent it! Then I went away again. But I started to tell thee something else.

As in the morning I was walking along by the Rechen towards Kailing, in the middle of the narrow gorge, whom dost thou think I met? Thou art right with thy first guess. He was sauntering leisurely over the smooth snow, his trousers tucked

inside of his high boots, and a leather satchel slung over his shoulder.

Mein Gott! thought I, now we shall have a pretty ado!

"What?" he called out gaily, "how didst thou know that I was coming to-day, Hans?"

"I did not know it. I am on my way to Kailing."

"Then I will walk back with thee," said Guido Winter. "There are many things to gossip about. Now comes the wedding!"

"Indeed! Whose, then? And where?"

"Before New Year's, if all goes well, I shall take my Barbel home."

"All will not go well," I replied.

"And I shall remain in Hoisendorf as teacher. For outside I have found nothing suitable."

Then I turned about and faced him, saying: "Winter! If thou hadst found something suitable outside, thou wouldst have remained there. As thou hast found nothing, thou hast returned to Hoisendorf to marry Barbel!"

"I shall marry her in any case!" he said.

"Thou wilt not marry her at all!" I answered.

"The devil!" he exclaimed, stepping back a few paces.

"Yes, my dear man, thou hast forfeited Barbel. She is already married!"

He stepped back a little farther still, folded his arms across his breast, and with wide, staring eyes, gazed at me and asked: "She is already married? How is that? I do not understand."

"I cannot say it any more plainly. Last Sunday the ceremony took place."

"But art thou in earnest? Did she really? Oh, what a strange girl!" he cried loudly, almost joyfully. "And whom did she marry?"

"Me!"

"I mean, who took her?"

"Myself!"

"Come now, Hans, this jesting is absurd. I thought thou wast in earnest."

He conducted himself quite differently from what I had expected. But when I assured him a second time that we had married during his absence, he seemed at last to be somewhat startled. "I should not have believed that possible," he said.

"Thou hast made it possible thyself, my dear Winter."

He bored his stick into the snow and muttered: "So, so—so, so. Well, it is all right. I had an idea that she did not love me; perhaps she never loved me. She was wise; she has broken it off. And it is a good thing, too. But what surprises me is my loyal friend, Hans Trautendorffer, who at one time took so much trouble to marry his sweetheart to someone else. When he could find no other husband for her he took her himself. Very noble conduct, Herr Trautendorffer! I bid adieu to your friendship in future!" And with these words, he walked proudly away, out through the gorge.

Donnerwetter! What an exit! I was completely

annihilated. But I do not begrudge him the fine effect; I prefer my own point of vantage. And I am glad that it ended as it did. I was—to speak frankly—a little dreading this scene.

What if he had really cared for her? Then I should not like to be Hans Trautendorffer! The absence of love between them was what justified us, her, me and—him. What I have had to settle with myself on her account, all alone for months, that is over now.

For the present I have told Barbel nothing of our meeting in the Rechen gorge. Franzel brought home the news to-day from Hoisendorf that the substitute teacher would probably take the position permanently. I have had Winter's large trunk taken away by one of the inn-keeper's waggons.

And now I am sorry for him!

ADAMSHAUS, Fifty-second Sunday.

The year has surely been rich with surprises for me, but the greatest one of all came in thy Christmas letter. Thou glorious man, how didst thou accomplish it? So the publishing house of Staackmann in Leipzig will accept my Sunday letters for the sum of ten thousand *Gulden!* There are our twenty thousand *Kronen!* And this has the advantage that it is not an unsubstantial wager, but something honestly earned. Now we are saved. *Herrgott im Himmel,* that is a windfall!

But the Sunday letters! These letters which I wrote in my stall-chamber, my heart throbbing with

fear, or swelling with heavenly bliss, now cursing like hell, now arrogant, gossiping, self-complacent, ironical, at one moment too stupid for God, at the next too wicked for the devil—and all this shall be given to the world? Friend, for that we shall require a long blue pencil. The first letters of the year which were written to the various gentlemen of *The Continental Post* are already in thy possession? Thou art my Providence in human form! Of course we must find an attractive title for the book. The one suggested, "The Heritage of Sin," I do not like. That might seem to refer to the pair of lovers, or else to have some connection with the "sweat of the brow," that is, farm labour. Neither the one nor the other suits me. Sin may be punished in our descendants, but not inherited. And work is not a curse,—rather, a blessing. From the clod of earth are developed the forces for the whole world, bestowing blessings upon the tillers of the soil. Earth blessings, the fullness of the earth,—"The Earth and the Fullness Thereof!" How does that sound? In a few days we will discuss it in person.

Now I will close the year with a description of our Christmas festival. Ah, how much more difficult it is to write since I know that the compositor is looking over my shoulder!

The day before Christmas we laid aside all our tools at noon and donned our best clothes. Valentin, wishing to preserve the old customs on feast days, followed his father, Adam's example, and

took the crucifix down from the corner and set it on the white-covered table. The housemother placed two candles beside it, from those which my Barbel had made on that fateful Sunday. Rocherl grew quite pale in his devotional mood, and my little girl was silently busy caring for the domestic animals, to keep them from making a noise. The entire Adamshaus was transformed into a chapel. And the mother! This deep, speechless faith, this sincere expectation of the Christ-child, thou canst have no conception of it. To think of having faith like that! It is, of course, partly habit and partly inherited, but the fortitude of this hard-working woman comes to her directly from God, the Father, and His Son.

Barbel is the same. She put fresh earth into the jar holding the cherry-branches and watered it. But no blossoms have yet appeared. Once she looked dreamily at the branches and murmured softly: "It will come to nothing. The Christ-child does not pardon."

At eleven o'clock in the evening they lighted a torch and went down to church. I had told them that I would guard the house and should like a Christmas all to myself. At midnight I locked the door and crossed the frozen snow to the summit of the Kulmplatte. The starlit sky arched over the snowy landscape. The bells were ringing in Hoisendorf. The church windows stood out like red quadrangles in the dark valley. From the opposite direction a sound of bells also came across the

wooded hills. Thus on this midnight the whole country is illuminated and filled with melody. And the holy Christ lives in millions of human hearts, as truly and really as anything that can be seen and heard and felt. My thoughts moved in a rhythm like the psalms: My sorrows have I scattered as seed in the heavens, and my naked soul pastures in the garden of the stars!

I shall soon descend to earth once more. When will another hour come which will bring me so near to heaven?

On Christmas morning I was awakened by the sound of joyous laughter. Two sunbeams streamed into the room, one of them falling on the table where the jar with the cherry-branches stood. All three bore tiny pink blossoms! That was why my Barbel was laughing and overflowing with happiness in her white bed. The Christ-child had pardoned!

When Rocherl heard of the wonder that the cherry-branches had bloomed, he leapt for joy, so high that the feather in his hat brushed the ceiling. "Hurrah, Barbel is happy!"

Now, my friend, I understand this boy for the first time. Barbel has had faithful guardians, passionate and foolish guardians, but Heaven was the wisest of them all!

On Christmas Day after the service we had a feast, in which were no traces of the hail-storm of August. We had even a jug of wine, that Valentin, the epicurean, had brought from the inn, and it was the housemother who took it first into her hands

and, before drinking, gave the toast: "To the health of Hansel and Barbel!"

After the meal was over there was something else. Franzel remembered that he had a letter in his pocket which the three-legged postman had left for Barbel. It was from Guido Winter in Vienna. He bade her farewell and sent greetings to us all, and hoped to be remembered kindly. On account of his unfitness he had given up teaching and, through the aid of a friend, had secured a situation in the office of a bicycle factory.

When the letter had been read several of us exclaimed in the same breath: "He is a good sort of fellow after all!"

And now I will end my letter. For my little girl, Mistress Barbara, insists on looking upon my confidential correspondence as a gross infringement of her special rights. She has already made one or two playful attempts to wrest the pen from my hand. That is unwise of her. If this hand is not allowed to hold the pen, it will grasp the wanderer's staff and go away for at least two days to look up my faithful friend. I will make her, poor little dear, a grass widow, in order to be with thee on January 3rd. Have in readiness a bottle of Rüdesheimer, for a hardy, sunburnt peasant will appear before thee, consumed with thirst and filled with thankfulness to thee, thou dear, loyal fellow.

THE END

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